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**Comparing Teacher Perception of English Language Learners at the High  
School Level:  
A Case Study of E.P.I.S.D.**

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**Comparing Teacher Perception of English Language Learners at the High**

**School Level:**

**A Case Study of E.P.I.S.D.**

by

Guillermo Mancha, Jr., A.A.; B.S.; M.A.

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**Comparing Teacher Perception of English Language Learners at the High**

**School Level:**

**A Case Study of E.P.I.S.D.**

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Co-Supervisor: Michael Thomas

Co-Supervisor: Norvell Northcutt

The academic achievement gap between English language learners (ELLs) and other student groups, especially at the secondary level, is a problem that only will increase as Hispanic demographics increase at state and national levels. It is imperative to examine the factors that affect or influence the academic achievement of ELLs and identify issues within the educational culture, systems, and constituents that have a negative effect on the academic performance of ELL students. This case study research examined the practices and organizational frameworks through the perspectives, or mind maps, of teachers who work with ELLs at E.P.I.S.D. in Texas.

The study was guided by three research questions: (a) What is the mind map of high school teachers in producing a high-performing ELL, (b) what is the mind



map of high school teachers in producing a low-performing ELL, and (c) how do these two mind maps compare with one another? Using an Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) methodology, this study actively engaged constituents in reflective, meaningful discourse surrounding a phenomenon of interest, resulting in rich, comprehensive data that can be utilized for decision making in strategic planning and implementation of change. The IQA process and analysis served as a needs assessment technique on how to better serve ELLs.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

### **Introduction**

Educational reform and restructuring is currently changing a variety of aspects in education in an attempt to compel and commit the education community and policymakers to assure the success of all students. Educational leaders and policymakers have accomplished much by elevating accountability standards, making curriculum adjustments, and creating more stringent achievement performance levels for students and schools. The closing of the academic achievement gap between the various student subgroups has been, is, and will continue to be an issue of concern for much of the reform and restructuring movement. Different programs and initiatives have been implemented to reach, educate, and provide a high-quality education to students at different academic levels, social classes, ethnicities, and backgrounds. However, regardless of these efforts, students who are recognized as English language learners (ELLs) experience and will continue to experience an academic achievement gap compared to other student populations if proactive and effective measures are not taken to ensure that a quality education is provided for them. This research is designed to address this gap by examining factors that affect or influence the academic achievement of ELLs and identifying issues within the educational culture, systems, and constituents that have a negative effect on the academic performance of ELLs. Such research can aid in educational reform.

In 1983 the Reagan Administration published a report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education titled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. The National Commission on Excellence in Education took a stern stance, stating, “The mediocre educational performance that exists today. ...We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament” (p. 1). The report revealed an “erosion of standards” and a “rising tide of mediocrity” in public schools (p. 1). The disenfranchised constituents of educational institutions and society found hope in these pronouncements. While some significant academic achievement advances were accomplished in the 1980s for various student subgroups, regrettably for many of these constituents, these promises of hope have not come to full fruition or have not continued to build on the progress trends of the 1980s.

More recently, in early 2002, under the George W. Bush Administration, Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Within the mandates of this bill, ELLs were one of the priorities. According to a publication titled *A Guide to Education and No Child Left Behind*, published by the U.S. Department of Education (2004),

President Bush is committed to expanding educational opportunities for all students, including students who are learning the English language and students who are new to this country. Children learning English face some of the greatest educational challenges due to language and cultural barriers. That is why President Bush and Congress pushed through the historic education reforms of No Child Left Behind. The law ensures that all children—from every ethnic and cultural background—receive a quality education and the chance to achieve their academic potential. (p. 16)

The publication goes on to state that President Bush's 2005 budget "provides \$681 million for English language acquisition funding for children who are learning the English language, so they can reach their academic potential and fully participate in the American dream" (p. 16). Time will tell if the pronouncements made in this piece of legislation will materialize; coincidentally, the pronouncements made by NCLB seem to be similar to the pronouncements made by *A Nation At Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) nearly 20 years earlier.

To provide all children, regardless of race or background, with an equal life chance to achieve the American dream or reach their full academic potential, educational leaders, policymakers, and educational institutions must strategize and address difficult issues deeply rooted within the educational culture, political spectrum, and educational frameworks that negatively impact the academic performance of ELLs. With the current rationale that no child gets left behind the educational promises continue to accumulate. Yet, in the midst of these promises, the educational values, culture, and structural mechanisms that perpetuate inequities in educational opportunities or the academic achievement gap for ELLs continue to be overlooked or dismissed.

Nurturing a culture of equitable academic success requires that educational leaders and policymakers examine policies, educational structures, and educational practices that continue to perpetuate the academic achievement gap for the ELLs. Equitable academic success for all students, regardless of race or background, requires reform movements that confront not only the symptoms but also the causes that produce academic achievement gaps. In the absence of a meaningful, thoughtful

educational dialogue that effectively and successfully addresses the issues that create academic achievement gaps, reform efforts will continue to produce marginal and short-lived successes.

### **The Texas and National Demographic Shift**

Currently, many ELLs come from Hispanic or Latino ethnic backgrounds with Spanish as their first language and. According to Perez (2004),

Latinos now represent the second-largest segment of the school-aged population in the United States (after non-Hispanic whites). Latino parents recognize that education is critical to their children's opportunities in life. ...Compared with other racial/ethnic groups, Latino children are less likely to be enrolled in preschool or to complete high school. Also, many Latino children are not proficient with the English language. (p. 122)

Consistent with Perez's (2004) assertions of the Hispanic or Latino demographic representation throughout the United States, a Texas demographer, Murdock (n.d.), illustrated through a series of tables and graphs the striking demographic shifts in Texas that will alter significantly the diversity and ethnic composition of student populations in public schools. Through these tables and graphs, Murdock predicted some staggering demographic shifts encompassing the ELL population classified as the Hispanic population (ELLs may also be classified under the category titled Other, such as Asian Americans). According to Murdock, these predictions should take place gradually through the year 2040.

As illustrated in Table 1, Murdock (n.d.) showed that Texas ranks second in the nation by the race/ethnicity groups. These ethnic groups are classified as Anglo, Black, Hispanic, and other populations. The data indicate that in the year 2000, Texas had over 11 million residents classified as Anglo, making the Anglo ethnic category the majority. The Hispanic population was more than 6.6 million residents, slightly more than half of the Anglo population. Furthermore, the Hispanic population in Texas was the largest minority by a margin that exceeded 4.2 million. Finally, Texas was among the top four states in sheer size of overall population and categorical populations in 2000. Table 1

*Texas Rank Among States on Selected Characteristics of Race/Ethnicity Groups, 2000*

Group	Texas value	Texas rank	Comparison areas
Anglo	11,074,716	3	California: 17.0 million New York: 12.5 million
Black	2,421,653	2	New York: 2.9 million
Hispanic	6,669,666	2	California: 11.0 million
Other	685,785	4	California: 4.2 million New York: 1.2 million

*Note.* From “Population Change in Texas: Implications for Human and Socioeconomic Resources in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” by S. H. Murdock, n.d., San Antonio: The University of Texas, Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research.

As illustrated in Table 2, Murdock (n.d.) stated that Texas ranks second in the nation by race/ethnicity groups in the category of numerical change between 1990 and 2000, with the race/ethnicity categories broken down into Anglo, Black, Hispanic, and other populations. The data indicate that between the years of 1990 and 2000 Texas had more than 2.3 million residents characterized as Hispanic. Furthermore, within Texas, Table 2 clearly illustrates the numerical change of individuals between 1990 and 2000: The Hispanic population outgrew the Anglo population by a margin that exceeded 1.5 million, the Black population by a margin that exceeded 1.8 million, and the other category by a margin that exceeded 2 million.

Table 2

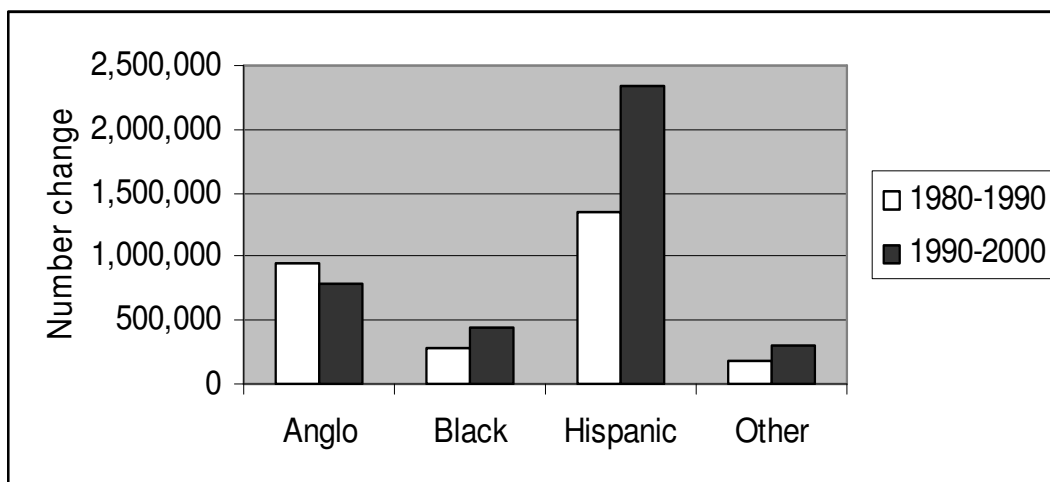
*Texas Rank Among States on Selected Characteristics of Race/Ethnicity Groups, Numerical Change 1990–2000*

Group	Texas value	Texas rank	Comparison areas
Anglo	783 036	2	Florida: 1.1 million
Black	445,293	3	Florida: 665,000 Georgia: 627,000
Hispanic	2,329,761	2	California: 3.3 million
Other	307,220	3	California: 1.2 million New York: 493,000

*Note.* From “Population Change in Texas: Implications for Human and socioeconomic Resources in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” by S. H. Murdock, n.d., San Antonio: The University of Texas, Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research.

As illustrated in Figure 1, Murdock (n.d.) noted the population change by race/ethnicity within Texas during the 1980–1990 and 1990–2000 decades.

According to Figure 1, the Hispanic population grew by nearly 1 million individuals between the two decades, while the Anglo population decreased by more than 150,000 individuals within the same period. This indicates that the Hispanic population is growing more rapidly than the Anglo population, and that the Anglo population is steadily declining. The Black and other categories also increased in number but nowhere near the Hispanic population.



*Figure 1.* Numerical change in population by race/ethnicity in Texas for 1980-1990 and 1990-2000. Data from “Population Change in Texas: Implications for Human and Socioeconomic Resources in the 21st Century” by S. H., Murdock, n.d., San Antonio: The University of Texas, Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research.

Table 3 illustrates comparisons between the Anglo, Black, Hispanic, and other populations in Texas between 2000 and 2040. Murdock (n.d.) predicted the Hispanic population considerably outgrowing all other ethnic populations, attempting to take into account some possibilities of migration patterns. According to Perez (2004),

More than half of Latinos—and 85% of Hispanic children—were born in the United States; recent data from the Urban Institute show that one in ten Latino children lives in a “mixed-status” household in which both immigrant and native-born Latinos reside. (p. 122)

Murdock’s predictions suggest that the increase in the Hispanic population and a decrease in the Anglo population will make the Hispanic population the most prevalent ethnicity in the state of Texas. If this is the case, the Hispanic population will continue to be a political and social force that will impact all aspects of society.



Table 3

*Texas Population in Texas by Race/Ethnicity in 2000 and Projections of the Population in Texas by Race/Ethnicity from 2001 to 2040 (in Rounded Millions)*

Year	Ethnicity, by millions of people				Total
	Anglo	Black	Hispanic	Other	
2000	11.07	2.42	6.67	0.69	20.85
Assuming zero migration					
2010	11.29	2.60	7.99	.078	22.57
2020	11.32	2.73	9.22	0.83	24.10
2030	11.09	2.76	10.41	0.86	25.11
2040	10.60	2.70	11.41	0.86	25.56
Assuming rates of net migration equal to one half of 1990–2000					
2010	11.49	2.73	9.00	0.95	24.18
2020	11.74	3.00	11.74	1.26	27.74
2030	11.70	3.19	14.90	1.60	31.39
2040	11.38	3.28	18.39	1.95	35.01
Assuming rates of net migration equal to 1990–2000					
2010	11.70	2.86	10.16	1.17	25.90
2020	12.17	3.31	15.06	1.90	32.43
2030	12.35	3.69	21.53	2.96	40.54
2040	12.23	4.00	29.93	4.44	50.58

*Note.* From “Population Change in Texas: Implications for Human and Socioeconomic Resources in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” by S. H. Murdock, n.d., San Antonio: The University of Texas, Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research.

Figure 2 illustrates the ethnic composition of the Texas population enrolled in elementary and secondary schools and colleges/universities in 1990 and 2030. In 1990, 32.2% of public schools (elementary and secondary) were occupied by Hispanic students, whereas in 2030, Murdock (n.d.) predicted 53.4% of schools will be occupied by Hispanic students. According to these projections, there will be fewer Anglo school-aged children and a greater increase in the number of Hispanic school-aged children. Perez (2004) implied agreement with the predictions, stating that currently

Latinos are a young population. More than one-third are under 18 years of age and almost half are under the age of 25.2, both the size of the Latino population and its youthfulness mean that the well-being of the Hispanic

community—and especially of Latino children—matters to the future economic and social status of the United States as a whole. (p. 122)

According to Figure 2, Murdock predicted the same for colleges and universities.

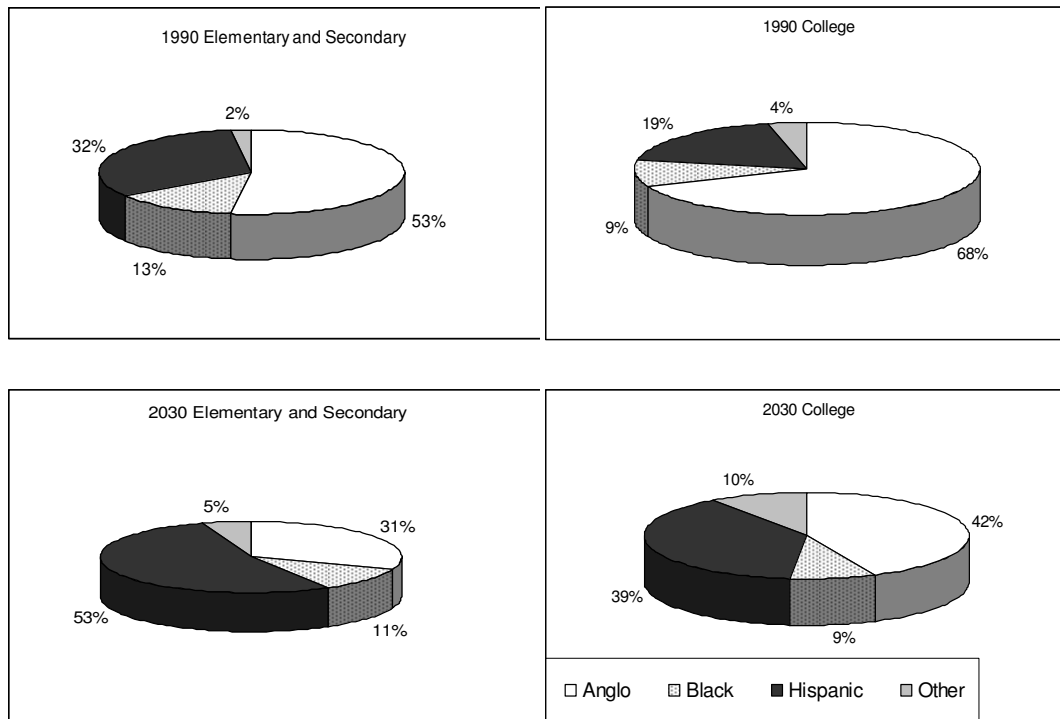
These assertions and predictions highlight further the importance of equal educational opportunities and addressing the academic achievement for ELLs to narrow the gap and secure an educated population for future generations.

Perez (2004) provided additional data on national demographic trends, stating,

One of the most profound demographic shifts in the United States during the past two decades has been the dramatic increase in the Hispanic population, driven both by high birth rates relative to other racial and ethnic groups, and by immigration. ...The Hispanic population grew by 58% from 1990 to 2000, and in 2003 became the largest “minority” community in the country with a total of 38.8 million people. Today, about one in eight Americans is of Hispanic origin...70% of Latinos live in five states: California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois. (p. 122)

These statements are similar with the findings and predictions Murdock (n.d.)

illustrated with his report. Furthermore, these data highlight the urgency and the need for studies to identify educational constituents, practices, cultures, and systems to form an effective plan that addresses the inequities of educational opportunity, closes the achievement gap, and accomplishes social equality in the United States for all citizens.



*Figure 2.* Ethnic diversity of the population enrolled in elementary and secondary schools and colleges in 1990 and 2030. Data from “Population Change in Texas: Implications for Human and Socioeconomic Resources in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” by S. H. Murdock, n.d., San Antonio: The University of Texas, Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research.

Perez (2004) went on to report,

Many Latino children are not proficient with the English language...an educational issue of concern is the fact that the nation’s schools now serve more than five million students who are ELLs (referred to as “limited English proficient,” or LEP, in federal law and regulations), and nearly 80% of these English language learners speak Spanish as their first language. (p. 123)

Furthermore, Perez declared,

As the NCLB Act requires all states to help all limited English proficient students meet the same academic benchmarks as their English-proficient peers, those states with new and growing Hispanic populations must learn quickly how to serve the increasing numbers of English language learners in their schools. (p. 123)

With these statements, Perez suggested that the LEP or the ELL population has a significant concentration in the Hispanic ethnic category.

These demographic trends and analysis in Texas and the United States highlight the necessity for an educational reform that successfully addresses the root causes that produce the academic achievement gap between the ELLs and all student groups in public schools. Concentrating efforts on the symptoms that produce inequities that perpetuate minimal advancement for ELLs will not provide long-lasting academic achievement results; educational leaders and policymakers must design reform efforts that address directly the deeply rooted causes that perpetuate academic achievement inequities.

Perez (2004) shed light on national trends by stating that Latinos currently represent the second-largest body of school-aged children in the United States. She continued, “Many Latino children are not proficient with the English language...data show that only about 60% of Latino students are completing high school, compared with almost 90% of both white and black students” (pp. 122-123). Perez made a final point that despite more than 5 million LEP students in the United States,

There is a dearth of information on the most effective practices to serve these students. In particular, very few large-scale assessments are being developed that are appropriate for English language learners, which is worrisome since the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires schools to improve instruction and outcomes for these children as measured primarily through test scores. (p. 123)

With these demographic trends at the national and state level, the lack of effective educational resources and practices, and legislation such as NCLB, educational leaders and policymakers must address the source that continues to propagate the academic achievement gap between all student groups in public schools. Rather than concentrating efforts on the symptoms that produce inequities that perpetuate minimal advancement of ELLs, educational leaders and policymakers

must design reform efforts that directly address inequities. The need for research is evident in order to eradicate the academic achievement gap and accomplish social justice.

### **Academic Achievement Gaps**

In an era of educational reform encompassing shifting student demographics, legislated increased accountability at the national and state level, and evolving norms for public education, educational leaders and policymakers have struggled with the extremely difficult task of closing the achievement gap between all subgroups. Educational leaders and policymakers have continued reform efforts in an attempt to provide equity, a high-quality education, and educational opportunities for all children, regardless of race or background. Despite such efforts, an effective strategy, policy, or reform process that successfully closes the achievement gap between ELLs and their White, English-speaking counterparts continues to elude them.

According to Reynolds (2002),

The term achievement gap is used to denote differences in academic achievement of particular groups of students. ...The issue is not simply between blacks and whites or rich or poor. ...There are many gaps, and the gaps themselves have changed over time. (p. 3)

According to Robelen (2002),

By the end of fourth grade, African-American, Latino, and poor students of all races are two years behind other students. By eighth grade, they have slipped three years behind. And when they reach twelfth grade, poor and minority students are about four years behind.

Reynolds provided insight to the achievement gap, and Robelen placed the severity of the problem in context.

Many theories claim to identify some of the contributing factors to the achievement gap in general. These theories revolve around factors within the school setting and outside the school setting. The theories that deal with factors from within the school setting consist of the following:

1. Minorities take fewer Advanced Placement courses (Reynolds, 2002).
2. Minorities have less qualified teachers (Reynolds, 2002).
3. Class size and teacher preparation are factors: Minority students are more likely to be in overcrowded classrooms and to have teachers who are less experienced and less prepared to teach (Viadero, 2003).
4. Minorities are overrepresented in the area of disciplinary actions (Reynolds, 2002).
5. Low expectations of teachers of poor and minority students are a factor (Reynolds, 2002).
6. Knowledge, recognition, and acceptance of (minority) culture combine to be a factor (Guerrero & Sloan, 2001).

Theories that deal with factors outside the school setting consist of the following:

1. Economic, political, and social forces within a community served by a school interact to influence the literacy development of students in the classroom, especially those students outside the dominant culture. (Guerrero & Sloan, 2001).
2. Parental influences are especially salient (Reynolds, 2002): (a) parents are not as active in school, (b) parents are not insistent in school success of their children, and (c) parents may not help students with homework. Reynolds (2002) did state that

some of these theories lack research in order to link the theory to student achievement.

However, research has proven that a quality teacher is one of the most important factors in student success and that the students most in need of quality teachers are generally the least likely to get them (Reynolds, 2002). There is also a gap in the background and experience of teachers who teach in high-minority, high-poverty schools and those who teach in more affluent, predominantly White schools (Reynolds). “On average, teachers at high-poverty schools have less experience, come from less selective colleges, and fail certification tests more frequently than those who teach at schools with low-poverty and low-minority enrollments” (Robelen, 2002). Haycock (1998) noted, “While the teaching force in high-poverty and high-minority communities certainly includes some of the most dedicated and talented teachers in the country, the truth is that these teachers are vastly outnumbered by under- and, indeed, unqualified colleagues” (p. 7). Teacher quality and effective strategies for teaching all students and impacting the learning environment are critical factors in the overall school experience for students. A poor school experience for a student all too often translates into a dropout statistic, especially with students of color, students who are classified as low socioeconomic status (SES), or students who have learning challenges such as being LEP.

The radically changing demographics of Texas indicate that public education must get a handle on the academic achievement gap and do a better job of educating the ELL student population. The necessity for educational reforms stem from the growing demographic changes; NCLB; and more importantly, the fundamental

foundations of equity, equal educational opportunity, and social justice. The focus of producing academic success among all students, the narrowing of the academic achievement gap, regardless of race or background, can no longer be overlooked or dismissed.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The academic achievement gap between ELLs and other student groups, especially at the secondary level, is a problem that will only increase as Hispanic demographics increase at state and national levels. It is imperative to examine the factors that affect or influence the academic achievement of ELLs and identify issues within the educational culture, systems, and constituents that have a negative effect on the academic performance of ELL students. Therefore, this case study research will examine the practices and organizational frameworks through the perspective of teachers that work with ELLs at E.P.I.S.D. in Texas.

Educational reform and restructuring is reinventing the values, intent, and guidelines of public education. On a national level, NCLB has dominated the nation as a society struggles with issues of how to best educate all students, each with his or her own needs, abilities, and capabilities. On a state level, Texas is experiencing major ongoing changes in its general population and student demographics, especially within the Hispanic community. Research has shown that many ELLs are concentrated within the Hispanic community, and Texas currently hosts the second-largest concentration of Hispanic individuals in the nation. Moreover, the present Hispanic community is a rapidly growing political and social force that is and will



impact all facets of society at a state and national level. This trend will continue to evolve. Educational leaders and policymakers have increased efforts aimed at providing equity, high-quality educational resources and educational opportunities for all children. Additionally, they have intensified accountability systems, curriculum standards, and academic performance expectations and have underscored the significance of eliminating the academic achievement gap between all ethnicities and student categorical groups. However, the academic achievement gap between ELLs and other student groups, especially at the secondary level, is currently at the degree of a national crisis facing educational leaders, policymakers, and society; if not adequately addressed, the magnitude of the repercussions for future generations may have a daunting and devastating effect on all aspects of society. While reform efforts and research literature have brought the problem to the forefront, programs that have proven some level of success and widespread sustainable academic success among ELLs continues to escape most school districts. In order to provide all children with an equal life chance to achieve their full academic potential, we must confront and address issues within the educational culture, systems, and constituents that have a negative effect on the academic performance of ELLs.

Many theories linger as to why reform efforts are repeated, and these same efforts continuously fail. Cuban (1990) stated,

Reforms return because policymakers fail to diagnose problems and promote correct solutions. Reforms return because policymakers use poor historical analogies and pick the wrong lessons from the past (Katz, 1987 as cited in Cuban, 1990). Reforms return because policymakers fail “to think seriously about the educational purposes (Silberman, 1971 as cited by Cuban, 1990). Reforms return because policymakers cave into the politics of the problem rather than the problem itself. Reforms return because decision makers seldom seek reliable, correctly conducted evaluations of program effectiveness before

putting a program into practice (Slavin, 1989 as cited by Cuban, 1990). In short, were policymakers to pursue a rational course of analysis and decision-making and, where fitting, use research and evaluation results properly; there would be no need for the same solutions to reenter the policy arena. (p. 6)

Additional research is needed in creating reform efforts aimed at eliminating performance gaps and nurturing a culture of equitable academic success among all student populations. This research will require educational leaders and policymakers to examine educational policies, educational structures, political frameworks, educational tenets, and practices that continue to perpetuate conditions of underachievement among ELLs and other student populations. Employing educational leaders and policymakers in a profound educational dialogue related to the academic achievement gap and employing research-based reforms are essential to the successful transformation of our educational system, resulting in the narrowing of the academic achievement gap. It is imperative to examine the factors that affect or influence the academic achievement of ELLs. Therefore, in this study, the researcher will examine the practices and organizational frameworks through the perspective of teachers that work with ELLs at EPISD.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that influence the academic achievement of ELLs at the high school level, in the form of a mind map, or a mental picture or point of view of an individual of a process to accomplish a given task. One mind map was the perception of high school teachers producing high-performing ELLs, as it identifies the components of the education of ELLs and how they are linked. The other mind map was the perception of high school teachers producing

low-performing ELLs, as it identifies the components of the education of ELLs and how they are linked. Additionally, the study was designed to compare and contrast relationships among the mind maps and how they influence the academic achievement of ELLs. This study accomplished this by using a qualitative research approach and employing an Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) methodology that actively engages constituents in reflective, meaningful discourse surrounding a phenomenon of interests resulting in rich, detailed, intensive, and comprehensive data that can be utilized for decision making in strategic planning and implementation of change. The IQA process and analysis serves as a needs assessment technique on how to better serve ELLs.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the mind map of high school teachers in producing a high-performing ELL?
2. What is the mind map of high school teachers in producing a low-performing ELL?
3. How does the mind map of teachers producing high-performing ELLs compare to the mind map of teachers producing low-performing ELLs?

### **Methodology**

The purpose of the study was to attempt to capture and relate the EPISD teachers' thoughts, experience, emotions, and perceptions of factors that influence the academic achievement of ELLs. A qualitative approach was selected because of its

ability to fully capture, in depth and detail, the experiences of the participants (Patton, 2002).

The qualitative research employed IQA as the methodology of choice. Developed by Northcutt and McCoy (2004) at The University of Texas at Austin, IQA is a systems approach to qualitative research that identifies relationships among self-identified components of an issue. Designed as both a deductive and inductive systems approach to qualitative research, IQA allows

...a group to create its own “interpretive quilt,” and then to similarly construct individual quilts of meaning: Together, the two levels of meaning are used by the investigator as the foundation for interpretation. The quilt is represented as a system of patches (affinities) held together by stitches (relationships among affinities). (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 43)

Designed to minimize the involvement of the researcher while providing the participants an extraordinary degree of freedom, IQA seeks to capture the lived reality of people, actively involving participants in the mapping of their experiences.

The Academic Excellence Indicator System Report (AEIS) produced by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) was utilized to measure the closing of the academic achievement between ELLs and other student groups. This report is accepted in academia as a valid and reliable source of measurement.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this study the following terms are defined.

*Academic achievement gap* – The differences in an academic performance level by student subgroups as reported by the Academic Excellence Indicator System Report (AEIS) from the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

*Academic Excellence Indicator System Report (AEIS)* – The Texas assessment and accountability system that provides a basis for evaluation and reporting the extent to which students, campuses, and districts achieve academic standards (Alanis, 2003).

*Bilingual education* – The use of two languages in academic instruction to enable those whose primary or native language (L1) is not English, to learn English as their general education progresses.

*Dropout* – a student who does not graduate from high school for any reason except for illness or death.

*English as a second language (ESL)* – Popular intervention program for educating English language learners (ELLs) at the high school level.

*English immersion* – Refers to programs in which students, for whom English is a second language (L2), are submerged in English instruction with intense engagement.

*English language learner (ELL)* – a school-aged child in a school that speaks another language (L1) besides English (L2) as their primary language, regardless if born in the United States. These students are in the process of learning English.

*English-only instruction* – The policy of classroom teachers and other educators delivering the curriculum and methods of instruction that use solely the English language.

*English-only students* – Students who have English as their native language and do not use any other languages at home or school. This includes Hispanics who do not speak Spanish.

*High-quality education* – A level of education that will enable a student to be academically competitive with all other student subgroups and social norms.

*Hispanic* - The terms *Latino* and *Hispanic* are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau to identify persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, and Spanish descent; they may be of any race (Perez, 2004).

*L1* – Primary or native language acquired for communication.

*L2* – Secondary language acquired for communication, in addition to one's primary or native language.

*Language minority* – Students in the United States who come from homes and communities where a language other than English is spoken (Ortiz & Kushner, 1997).

*Late exit* – Instruction and support in the native language (L1) that is continued until redesignation.

*Latino* – See *Hispanic*.

*Limited English proficient (LEP)* – District and state designation for students who are judged not to be sufficiently fluent in English. Special language services are still needed for these students.

*Mind map* – A mental picture or point of view of an individual of a process or curricular program in order to accomplish a given task.

*Mobility* - A student is considered to be mobile if he or she has been in membership at the school for less than 83% of the school year (i.e., has missed six or more weeks at a particular school; this rate is calculated at the campus level by

dividing the number of mobile students in 2004-05 by number of students who were in membership at any time during the 2004-05 school year).

*Socioeconomic status (SES)* – Low SES is typically determined by whether students qualify for the free and reduced-price school lunch program.

*Texas Education Agency (TEA)* – The administrative unit for primary and secondary public education, the TEA is responsible for guiding and monitoring activities related to public education in Texas. The agency is authorized to carry out education functions specifically delegated under Sections 7.021, 7.055, or other provisions of the Texas Education Code (Alanis, 2003)

*Transitional bilingual education* – A program where both English (L2), and the ELL's primary language (L1) is used for instruction. This is an early exit program designed to teach English language skills and mainstream the students as soon as possible.

### **Significance of the Study**

As the Texas demographic shift continues to evolve, ELLs, primarily Hispanic students, will be the most prevalent ethnicity in public schools. Successfully serving this student population will become increasingly critical to the well being of the educational community and all facets of society. To meet the educational responsibilities of ELLs who persistently experience an academic achievement gap in U.S. public schools educators must comprehend the complexities that generate these academic achievement gaps between ELLs and other student groups.

The findings that emerged from this case study contributes to the body of knowledge and practice that contribute to the development and reform efforts for narrowing of the academic achievement gap and better serving ELLs. Specifically, the finding of this study identifies factors that influence the academic achievement for ELLs and their peers at the high school level. Moreover, the findings can be utilized to develop further and to reform more effective teaching practices and policies that lend themselves to ensuring sustainable academic successes for ELLs at the high school level.

### **Delimitation and Limitations**

#### *Delimitations*

The following are the delimitations of the study:

1. This study was conducted on one South Texas school district, EPISD. The findings of the study are true for this school district. Due to the demographic composition of the district, the geographical location of the district, and the financial situation of this school district, the results may not be applicable or transferable to other school districts.
2. This study focused on ELLs, and due to the proximity to Mexico the majority of the students' cultural background may have Mexican origins.
3. Along this same notion, the ELLs' primary or native language is Spanish.
4. Finally, this study was limited to the two high schools within EPISD.



### *Limitations*

Participants were asked to take part in this study voluntarily. Participants were identified through purposive sampling. Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam (2003) defined purposive sampling as follows: “The sample units are chosen because they have a particular feature or characteristics, which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study” (p. 78). The sample of the focus group consisted of high school teachers in EPISD who were selected by the district superintendent or the superintendent’s designee. The administration identified teachers who are regarded as (a) having success and (b) not having success in working with ELLs. Through this identification process, the focus groups were composed of individuals who work daily with ELLs, operate within bilingual policies and mandates, and possess intricate knowledge and experience of the overall education of ELLs.

Limitations included that focus group participants be bilingual (Spanish preferred) and have at least 3 years of experience working with ELLs, biases among the participants, and ability to generalize. Another limitation is that the study concentrates on high level teachers with high producing ELL’s and low level teachers with low producing ELL’s. The reason for this comparison of these two extremes is the availability in E.P.I.S.D. The study must be expanded to other school districts to effectively compare high level teachers with low producing ELL’s and/or low level teachers with high producing ELL’s. A final limitation is that the researcher, Guillermo Mancha, Jr., was born and reared in Eagle Pass and currently has family

there. He attended and graduated from Eagle Pass High School in 1990. Therefore he may have personal bias.

### *Assumptions*

The researcher made several assumptions for the study.

1. The researcher assumed that due to the geographic location (close proximity to Mexico) of the school district, EPISD will have a significant concentration of limited English proficient and students who are bilingual in Spanish and English.

2. An assumption was made that students classified as ELLs will speak Spanish (L1) as their primary language.

3. The researcher assumed that teachers would be candid and fully cooperative participants.

4. The researcher made the assumption that AEIS is a system that is valid and reliable in measuring the educational programs and student academic progress for all students and student subgroups.

### *Summary*

Educational reform and restructuring efforts are changing a variety of aspects in education in an attempt to compel and commit educational leaders and policymakers to assure the academic success of all students. Our society has experienced many forms and waves of systemic educational reform such as *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and NCLB. These

documents include several pronouncements of equity, reform, and social justice; however, these pronouncements have yet to fully fulfill all their promises.

Currently in the state of Texas, with information provided by demographers, a gradual but consistent demographic shift is occurring and will continue to occur for the near and distant future. The Hispanic population will continue to grow, predicted to become the most prevalent ethnicity in the state of Texas and its public schools. Traditionally, a significant percentage of ELLs in Texas have been of Hispanic decent. Furthermore, traditionally students classified as ELLs have experienced an academic achievement gap from their fellow peers. This academic achievement gap has been present for many years and has led ELLs to underachieve, lose hope, and drop out of school.

Educational leaders and policymakers have elevated accountability standards, made curriculum adjustments, and demanded more stringent performance levels of students and schools. However, the academic achievement gap between ELLs and their White, English-speaking counterparts can be categorized as a national crisis. If not adequately addressed, the magnitude of the repercussions for future generations may have a daunting and devastating effect on all aspects of society. Even though reform efforts, research literature, educational leaders, policymakers, and society as whole have acknowledged the problem, widespread sustainable academic success among ELLs continues to escape most school districts.

To provide all children, regardless of race or background, with an equal life chance, educational leaders, policymakers, and educational institutions must strategize and execute reform and restructuring systems that address difficult issues

deeply rooted within the educational political culture and systems that negatively impact the performance of ELLs. Nurturing a culture of equitable academic success requires that educational leaders and policymakers examine system policies, leadership structures, political frameworks, and practices that perpetuate conditions of underachievement among ELLs. The necessity for educational reform stems from the increasing demographic changes; NCLB; and more importantly, the fundamental foundations of equity, educational opportunity, and social justice. The focus of producing academic success among all students, the narrowing of the academic achievement gap, regardless of race or background, can no longer be overlooked or dismissed.

This chapter stated the problem and outlined a study on one South Texas school district. The study focused on the ELL student population at the secondary level. The study was a qualitative analysis of the experience of school district constituents to attempt to answer three questions regarding teacher perceptions and factors that influence ELL student achievement. Through this case study, the researcher hoped to add to the body of knowledge and practice of the education of ELLs.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

The following is a review of the literature that outlines and summarizes major findings and the general strands of thought as related to bilingual education and equitable academic success among student groups—in particular, the ELL student population and the Hispanic or Latino population. First, a brief dialogue will be presented on several curriculum programs and strategies utilized in public schools. Second, the elimination of the academic achievement gaps will be discussed. Third, critical findings of two studies conducted in the state of Texas that demonstrated equitable academic achievement among all student groups will be detailed. Fourth, the deficit-thinking model will be assessed as well as its position in the academic achievement of ELLs and students of color. Finally, a discourse of how people behave is determined by how they think will be offered.

“Bilingual education in the United States has been contested and reformulated with varying historical, political, social, and economic contexts” (Ovando, 2003, p. 1). Historically, the ELL and Hispanic student populations have been overlooked or purposely avoided in terms of direct effective education. A historical review of the American education system reveals resistance to recognize the ELLs and the Hispanic students as people with rich linguistic and cultural backgrounds. These students were not perceived as an asset to the educational classroom, the overall American educational system, or society. The ELL and Hispanic populations were considered a

group of people with limited or extremely deficient English language skills or a language handicap. Sanchez (1997) stated that educators used the language handicap argument as a means to cover up the lack of preparation or understanding on their part. He went on to state,

Many times a child would cringe and crouch, physically and emotionally, because the language of the home was taboo at school and the language of the school was nonfunctional at home. Here is the genesis of the *pachuco*, the delinquent. (Sanchez, 1997, p. 125)

Sanchez further qualified the characteristics of an ELL student: “The Spanish-speaking child in the Southwest is socially and economically disadvantaged. In health, wealth, and welfare he is at or near the bottom of the scale when compared to other Americans” (p. 131). Moreover, Sanchez stated, “Southern Texas has a concentration of Spanish-speaking [ELL] people,” and “These characteristics offer special challenges for schools at all levels of the curriculum” (p. 131). The ELL and Hispanic populations were seen as a delinquent and expendable group that could be used as a political pawn in the educational arena.

### **Curricular Programs and Strategies**

There is also debate about which curriculum programs and strategies best educate ELLs. Policies and initiatives drive bilingual education, but what happens when the ELL student is in the classroom? Ovando (2003) classified the curriculum programs as the following:

1. Structured Immersion Programs: There is no use of the native language, but students are given specialized ESL instruction tailored to level of English proficiency.
2. Partial Immersion Programs: These programs provide ESL instruction, and a small amount of time (e.g., 1 hour each day) may be set aside

temporarily for instruction in the native language, but the goal is to move to English as quickly as possible.

3. **Transitional Bilingual Programs:** The programs provide extensive instruction in the native language as well as in English. However, once a child attains a certain level of English proficiency, he or she is exited into a monolingual English program. The early-exit transitional bilingual programs mainstream students after 2 years or by the end of the second grade. A late-exit transitional program delays exiting students until the fifth or sixth grade. Programs vary and may not always adhere to these guidelines.
4. **Maintenance or Developmental Bilingual Education:** Extensive instruction is provided in the native language as well as in English. Unlike students in transitional bilingual education, those in a maintenance or developmental program continue to receive part of their instruction in the native language even after they become proficient in English.
5. **Two-way Immersion Programs:** Speakers of both languages are placed together in a bilingual classroom to learn each other's language and to work academically in both languages. In a two-way program, the language-majority children become bilingual and biliterate alongside the language-minority children. For example, English-speaking child learns Spanish while the Spanish-speaking child learns English within the same classroom. (p. 11)

An interesting point about these five curricular programs and strategies is that they have been around since the 1960s and are still used today.

Other issues of how to best educate the ELL student population are the identification of problems and implementation of research-based strategies to combat those problems. One issue is that recent educational policy seeks to bring ELLs to proficiency in 2 years; however, research has shown that students need 5–7 years to reach proficiency (Miller & Endo, 2004). Another issue or problem Miller and Endo identified is language shock. Language shock refers to the anxiety an immigrant (ELL) experiences when first entering a community in which he or she does not speak, or is not proficient in, the dominant language. This anxiety results in greater difficulty to perform well academically; students form negative associations with

speaking the English language, and children quickly learn that it is unacceptable to be different and language is obvious (Miller & Endo).

Yet, Miller and Endo (2004) identified students struggling with pedagogy and curriculum programs as another problem. Specifically, they detailed that students entering an American classroom for the first time are not accustomed to the curriculum, which lacks appreciation for their culture. Miller and Endo stated that teachers used a demeaning tone, did not allow asking questions or independent thinking, and used content the students could not relate to.

The issues or problems mentioned above can have devastating effects on ELLs, but they are not insurmountable. In fact, several strategies may be employed to combat these problems and provide ELLs with an opportunity to succeed academically. Miller and Endo (2004) identified the following:

1. Teachers can reduce the cognitive load of the ELLs. This may be accomplished by choosing assignments and activities to draw on the students' life experiences, previous knowledge, and taking into account the students' capacities.
2. Teachers can evaluate their own teaching practices and strategies. Some students may have difficulty adjusting to the classroom management style, some students need time to get comfortable, clear directions must be given at all times, and teachers need to vary their teaching styles.
3. Teachers can reduce the cultural load. Teachers ought to treat ELLs' homes, communities, languages, and cultures with respect, not judgment.



4. Teachers can reduce the language load. Teachers ought to use words in the English language that the ELLs are familiar with, so as not to place added pressure on students to figure out instructions or what was read.

5. ELLs should hold on to their native language. Studies have shown that students are more successful in the English language if they hold on to their native tongue. Miller and Endo (2004) agreed with Sanchez (1997), who stated, “Evidence is overwhelming that the home-language should be the springboard for the proper development of the second language” (p. 130). The first compromise of the ELLs, according to Sanchez, should be that the native language of the ELLs be used partially in classroom instruction.

6. Teachers and parents ought to form a team. As a team, teachers and parents can do the following: (a) First, teachers should recognize the importance of having ELL students learn both their native language and English; (b) both teachers and parents need to be aware of the ELL’s emotional state; (c) teachers and parents need to recognize negative forces affecting their ELL student; (d) teachers and parents should encourage the ELL to get involved in community events that cater to diverse languages and cultures; and (e) teachers must welcome parents as a valuable resource in the ELL’s education.

The conflict between native language and English must be resolved for several reasons. Some argue the English allows ELLs to become better assimilated into the United States; others point out that in America English is the official language (Miller & Endo, 2004). While both of these arguments may be true, the processes or steps taken to bring the ELL student population to the point of English

proficiency are crucial. The process of bringing a student to English proficiency should not be a trade-off or sacrifice of an individual's roots or ties to his or her mother country. Miller and Endo argued,

The majority of the ELL population wants to learn English, but to demand that they give up their native language and their native culture does more harm than good. New language learners (ELLs) are likely to be more successful if, instead, they are encouraged to embrace their own culture and learn a new language. They should be encouraged to add to their existing language and culture, rather than to exchange their own for a new one. (p. 788)

These are difficult tasks, and many of these notions or suggestions are easier said than done. However, we must face, tackle, and overcome the challenges presented by an ELL student. An educational system can be designed to produce a high-quality education for all children, eliminate the performance gaps, and establish an academic system that yields equitable academic success and social justice.

### **Eliminating Achievement Gaps**

To close the academic achievement gap and nurture a culture of equitable academic success among all student groups, educational leaders and policymakers must revise and scrutinize current educational policies, leadership models, micro-political frameworks, and educational practices. Without questioning or contesting these arenas, the academic achievement gap among ELLs and other student groups will continue to exist and maybe widen. An educational reform movement of equitable academic success necessitates underlying principles of equity and social justice encompassing an adequate plan of attack that addresses not only the symptoms but also the causes of perpetuated inequalities among student groups. In the absence

of a meaningful thoughtful plan of attack that directly impacts the academic achievement gap, academic success among ELLs will be scattered and short-lived.

With continued and persistent efforts in educational reform and pronouncements of equity, one may ask why the continued reforms yield little success pertaining to equitable academic achievement among all students regardless of race, class, or background. Several arguments apply to this question, and these arguments will be discussed throughout this chapter.

Cuban (1990) claimed,

It is important to policymakers, practitioners, administrators, and researchers to understand why reforms return but seldom substantially alter the regularities of schooling. The risks involved with a lack of understanding include pursuing problems with mismatched solutions, spending energies needlessly, and accumulating despair. (p. 11)

Cuban pointed out that a better job needs to be done with gathering data, tracing history, studying reforms in governance, and examining alternative explanations for the reforms attempted. Cuban concluded the article with a phrase by Andre Gide: “Everything has been said before, but since nobody listens, we have to keep going back and begin again” (p. 3). Cuban implied that historically, those in the educational arena have attempted to fix the same problems, using the same methods and expecting a different result. Without fully understanding and being aware of the all the components, or having the knowledge to successfully manipulate the process of reform, how will we arrive at the desired destination?

One argument is that the students are not conducive to producing high academic achievement results due to their backgrounds. Johnson (2002) argued, “The reason for underachievement rests solely on the backs of the students and their

families....” However, Johnson went on to state, “The primary problem lies not in the way...students of color view education but in the way they are taught” (p. 6).

We can’t ignore the damage done by what we as educators do: we take the children who have less to begin with and then systematically give them less in school, too. In fact, we give these children less of everything that we know makes a difference. (Haycock, 2001, p. 2)

Several studies have pointed to less quantifiable, but as least as influential, hurdles that poor and minority students face in schools. Research suggests that these students experience a different environment in school and are treated differently than their white and affluent counterparts. (Reynolds, 2002)

According to Johnson (2002), employing “quantitative and qualitative measures to get authentic information about the school and district cultures, measuring and monitoring outcomes, program effectiveness, policies, and practices at all levels of the institution should become interwoven into the everyday life of the institution” (p. 10). However, Johnson cautioned that a high probability of institutional biases and other uncomfortable issues may surface when policies and practices are analyzed. Johnson provided insight about this process, stating, “Potential for problem solving and improved practices related to student achievement” can be effectively addressed, particularly as it relates to the issue of equitable academic success (p. 10).

Scheurich and Skrla (2001) wrote, “Dialogue in education regarding equity and accountability has not been particularly fruitful and has, instead, resulted in hard, oppositional stances” (p. 322). They questioned, “Who owns truth or does research so complete that nothing is to be learned from listening to other voices, from considering their views, from contemplating different understandings” (p. 322). The process of listening to

...a diversity of voices and views, of choices and conclusions, is in itself productive; we must ask how we will decide which are the best policies, which are the policies most helpful to children, and which are the policies that increase equity. (Scheurich & Skrla, 2001, p. 322)

Scheurich and Skrla suggested that we must listen to all voices, from different ethnicities, age groups, or social classes, to have meaningful dialogue that formulates an effective plan of attack on educational reforms to nurture a culture of equitable academic success.

The academic achievement gaps among student subgroups may be difficult to close, but they are not impossible to overcome. Haycock, Jerald, and Huang (2001) stated,

But we could just as easily say that the lessons learned during the 1990s give us new direction and hope for the new century. Even though we failed as a country to narrow the achievement gap, actual student scores increased among most groups in many subjects, particularly mathematics. Moreover, the national averages concealed the enormous successes of individual states, districts and schools that saw an opportunity where others saw only obstacles. (pp. 20-21)

Furthermore, studies have suggested that equitable academic achievement gains are within grasp and attainable. Kober (2001) stated, “Overall achievement has risen, even as the test-taking population has changed to include a greater share of minority children, immigrant children, ELLs, and children with disabilities—subgroups that traditionally have performed at lower than average levels” (p. 2). Kober attributed academic achievement gains in the 1970s and 1980s to programs such as Head Start and Title 1. However, since the late 1980s, the academic achievement gap has remained the same, in part because academic gains of minorities did not exceed that of other student subgroups (Kober). Kober noted that standards-based reform has the potential to enhance equity, but this approach will not eliminate the academic

achievement gap by itself. According to Kober, “A complex combination of school, community, and home factors appears to underlie or contribute to the gap” (p. 3).

Haycock et al. also contributed the following:

We now know that standards must be high and apply to all, and they should be aligned with good assessments. We need accountability mechanisms that cast a spotlight on achievement by race, ethnicity and poverty so our failure to teach some kids can no longer be hidden. We must make sure every child has the benefit of a challenging curriculum and teachers qualified to teach it. We must provide extra time and support to students and their teachers. And we must allocate funds where they are most needed. (p. 21)

## **Evidence of Equitable Academic Success in Texas Schools: Findings from Two**

### **Major Texas Studies**

#### *Lessons From High-Performing Hispanic Schools*

Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) conducted the study “Lessons from High-Performing Hispanic Schools.” Three middle schools and two high schools located along the Texas–Mexico border were included in the study. Reyes et al. asserted that high-performing, economically disadvantaged Hispanic schools are built upon a learning community conceptual framework consisting of four broad categories: (a) learning conditions, (b) cultural elements, (c) implementing best practices, and (d) building the capacity to succeed.

The learning conditions category concentrates “on the knowledge required to develop a high-performing learning community, particularly what we know about the learning conditions of Hispanic students (e.g., the home/community, the classroom/learner, and the assessment conditions)” (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, 1999, p. 191). The awareness of the cultural element promotes the understanding of the learning conditions for the Hispanic population. Simply stated, instructors must

embrace the culture to effectively teach the Hispanic population. J. D. Scribner and Reyes clarified that cultural elements are “the deeply rooted, invisible forces that define those tangibles that affect all decision making and action taking of a responsive school culture” (p. 191). This category focuses on

...the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations that affect how knowledge is understood, whether it is used effectively or not, how verbal and nonverbal statements are interpreted, and what written documents leave out, or say or do not say “between the lines.” (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, 1999, p. 191)

The implementing best practices category focuses on practice of the disciplines of the learning organization by all the members of the learning community, which dictates whether the cultural elements become barriers to success. Wagstaff and Fusarelli (1999) asserted, “Schools with adequate resources and strong collaborative cultures are not driven by state-mandated accountability measures”; instead, accountability is “based on the belief that all children can learn and that the responsibility of administrators and teachers is to see that it happens” (p. 12).

Termed as the action dimension, building capacity to succeed category focuses on “making what we know and how we think and feel contribute to how we work together in ways that ensure that what we do produces outstanding results for all students” (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, 1999, p. 192). J. D. Scribner and Reyes explained that educators must experience a “localized” learning community where they genuinely enjoy the responsibility for student success (p. 195).

### *Equity-Driven Achievement-Focused School Districts*

Skrla, Scheurich, and Johnson (2000) published the study “Equity-Driven Achievement-Focused School Districts.” The authors noted, “Texas has played a prominent role in unfolding the story of school and district-wide equitable academic success” (p. 3).

In 1999, four school districts (Aldine ISD, Brazosport ISD, San Benito Consolidated ISD, and Wichita Falls ISD) were selected for an in-depth study as some of the “best of the best” in terms of widespread academic success for children from low-income homes and children of color. ...Based on 1997-98 AEIS data, these Texas districts had more than 5,000 students and more than one third of high poverty campuses rated Recognized or Exemplary. ... To earn a Recognized rating in the Texas accountability system at least 80% of all students, as well as 80% of African American, Hispanic, White, and low-income students, must pass each section (reading, writing, and mathematics) of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). To be rated Exemplary, schools and districts must have a 90% pass rate on the same measures. (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 3)

The Texas school districts in the Skrla et al. (2000) study proved that closing the academic achievement gap is possible for all students. The findings provided an in-depth understanding of the methods utilized within each of the four school districts, as those methods pertained to the organizational and operational processes and procedures that facilitated an equitable quality education for all children. Table 4 provides the individual characteristics of the four school districts that were chosen for Skrla et al.’s study.



Table 4  
*Characteristics of Districts Selected for Study*

District	Total students	No. of schools	%				1999-2000 rating <sup>a</sup>	Location
			African Am.	Hispanic	White	Low income		
Aldine	49,453	56	36	47	14	71	Recog.	Metro Houston
Brazosport	13,247	19	9	33	56	39	Exemp.	Gulf Coast
San Benito	8,697	17	0	97	3	87	Recog.	Rio Grande Valley
Wichita Falls	15,293	31	16	18	63	46	Recog.	NW Texas

*Note.* Data from “Equity-Driven Achievement-Focused School Districts,” by L. Skrla, J. J. Scheurich, & J. F. Johnson, 2000, Austin: The University of Texas, Charles A. Dana Research Center.

<sup>a</sup>Texas Education Agency ratings.

Skrla et al. (2000) uncovered three major transformations found in each of the four school districts studied:

1. The schools changed from a deficit model of low academic expectations to a high-performing equity model utilizing state mandates that all schools and districts succeed at equally high levels with all children.

2. A focus on learning was established by changing from input or process-driven schooling and educational accountability to results-driven educational accountability.

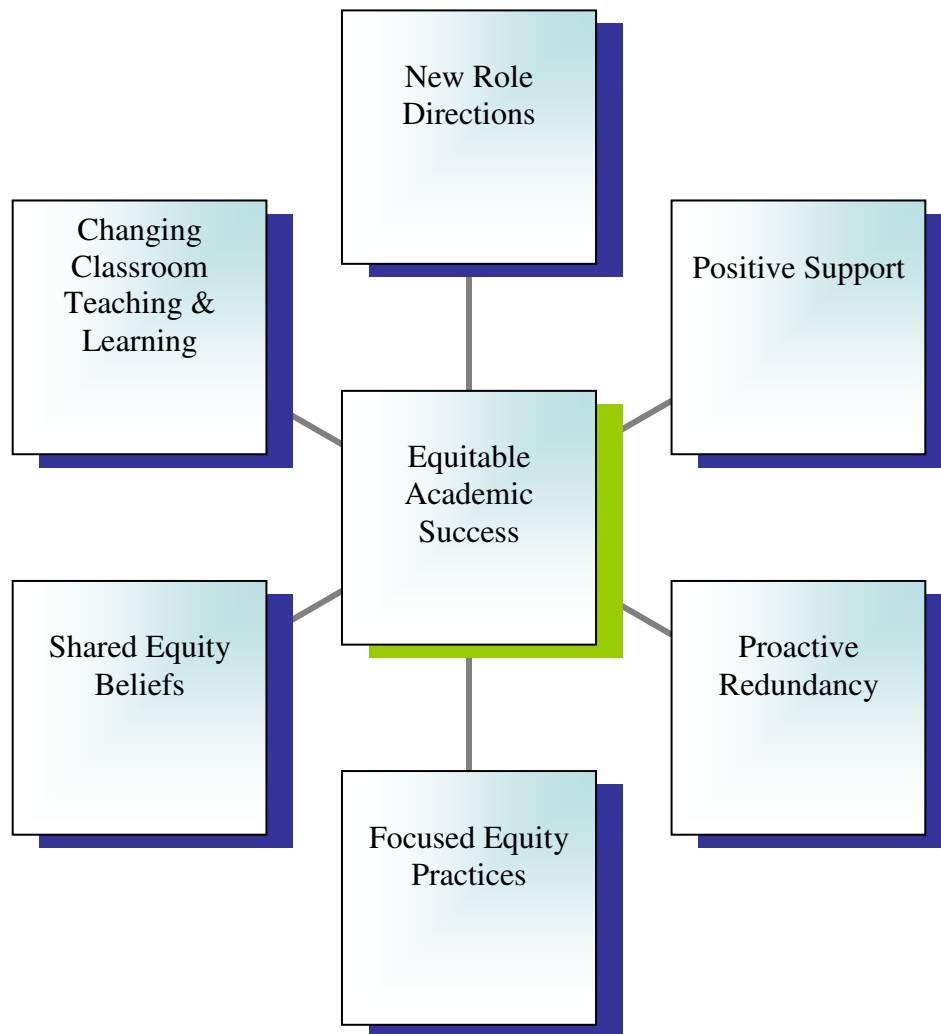
3. The public had access to disaggregated school and district performance data.

Similar to the “Lessons From High-Performing Hispanic Schools” study (Reyes et al., 1999), the findings from the “Equity-Driven Achievement-Focused School Districts” study (Skrla et al., 2000) identified both beliefs and practices as key ingredients to produce an equitable high-performing student population for all subgroups. Specifically, Skrla et al. highlighted six dimensions as necessary criteria

to formulating equitable academic success: (a) changing classroom teaching and learning, (b) shared equity beliefs, (c) focused equity practices, (d) proactive redundancy, (e) positive support, and (f) new role directions.

### *Criteria for Equitable Academic Success*

The following is an analysis of each of the six dimensions with theoretical findings from the two studies briefly presented above. Additional research is provided that supports these areas as essential criteria to producing an equitable high-performing student population. Figure 3 maps the six components and how they are connected to equitable academic success for all students.



*Figure 3. Six criteria for equitable academic success.*

#### *Changing Classroom Teaching and Learning*

Skrla et al. (2000) noted, “In these districts, leaders quickly determined the focus of the transformational process had to be the changes in the classroom. ...They acknowledged that learning occurs in the classroom; therefore, the classroom ought to be the focus of reform efforts” (p. 18). Skrla et al. stated that under the old system some teachers were not successful with children of color, which was unacceptable

under the new system; teachers' beliefs and practices had to change. In both of the studies (Reyes et al., 1999; Skrla et al.), a twofold reformation had to occur: "both deep (fundamental beliefs about how to teach and which students succeed) and a broad (actual teaching practices) transformation" (Skrla et al. p. 18). Skrla et al. explained that for teachers to be considered successful, they would have to become successful with all students regardless of race or background. Incidentally, a focus for district and campus leaders was the education of themselves and an educational institution of how to transform teacher's underlying beliefs and teaching practices to best meet the needs of all children.

Skrla et al. (2000) explained,

Teaching practices fail to change because traditional practices, and the assumptions underlying traditional practices, have been constantly supported and reinforced in the old system. ...That old system, traditional teaching practices yielded, and were expected to yield, a distribution of academic success that could be depicted by a bell curve. In that distribution, the high end of the distribution curve was disproportionately occupied by upper middleclass white children, and the low end of the curve was disproportionately occupied by students of all races from low SES homes and by students of color. (p. 19)

According to Skrla et al., this change in systems triggered a new accountability system that literally required academic success with all student groups. Thus, districts would have to determine how to help teachers become successful, how to change both the underlying beliefs and the teaching practices of teachers.

The focal point of the transformation required that teachers provide a caring environment in which students are viewed as the most valuable resources of the school, and, as such, "in a culture of caring, teachers do not expect students to repress their own background knowledge" (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, 1999, p. 201). Hence,

...rather than forcing students to respond to questions or activities that fit into the traditional framework of the classroom, teachers are willing to design their curriculum and classroom agendas to correspond with the complement the knowledge and understanding of the students they serve. (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, 1999, p. 201)

In a high-performing learning community among Hispanic students, culturally responsive pedagogy is a requisite (Johnson, 2002). Johnson argued that such an environment also “requires teachers who use culturally relevant approaches to create meaningful learning experiences for students. This approach to instruction builds on rather than ‘tears down’ or devalues a student’s background and experiences” (p. 9).

Further, “teachers create disciplined dialogues on subject matter. They critique and help each other become better teachers and they conduct research and question their teaching practices, with an eye toward constantly improving student learning” (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, 1999, p. 200). J. D. Scribner and Reyes explained, “Students themselves critique their own work, review their performance, and know exactly where they stand in relationship to standardized test performance” (p. 200). In short, “teachers use a pedagogy that establishes the relevance of classroom activities for students, responding to the students’ culture and needs” (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, p. 200). The result is democratic classrooms that inspire learning activities where all students are engaged. “A culturally responsive teacher interprets the individual’s behavior and manner of speaking as a part of the whole student and inventories these attributes as contributing to the positive inherent qualities of each and every student” (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, p. 200). Moreover, “a culturally responsive educator believes that every aspect of the individual has value and worth, and refuses to

categorize or label students as low-achieving or lacking in ability” (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, p. 200).

Creating and nurturing a learning environment where teachers support and encourage their students through experimentation, innovation, discovery, and problem solving is key to the process. J.D. Scribner and Reyes (1999) explained that students must

...experience the personal satisfaction gained from constructing their own knowledge in a social environment or contributing to another’s knowledge base and understanding. ... Students are encouraged to select relevant information from their environment, interpret it through what they already know, and construct new meaning or apply what they have learned to new and different situations. (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, 1999, p. 201)

Basically, the result is a conceptual understanding of the subject matter; teachers and students create new understandings and/or applications of knowledge through these activities. “When students are given a voice in deciding what and how they should learn, they begin to expect more of themselves and one another” (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, p. 202).

“The term instructional conversation refers to the type of dialogue that takes place between the ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’ as the teacher strives to help the student achieve or perform beyond his or her current capacity” (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, 1999, p. 202). Therefore, according to these authors, the teaching learning process is crucial to provoke and promote the use of higher order thinking skills in goal-directed activities. In addition to these activities, “dialogue helps students develop thinking skills and learn how to form, express, and exchange ideas in speech and writing” (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, p. 202). This learning environment of conversations and

interactions between teachers and students leads students to inquiry, sharing of ideas, and being engaged in higher order thinking skills.

### *Shared Equity Beliefs*

Skrla et al. (2000) conveyed that in their study, “district leaders sought to ingrain three shared beliefs regarding educational equity throughout all levels of the school district” (p. 19). They emphasized,

In order to get an entire district to respond in the ways that were necessary to meet the educational needs of all children, school board members, central office staff, principals, and teachers needed to be operating out of a common or shared set of beliefs. (p. 19)

According to the authors of the study, eventually all of the superintendents and individuals in the leadership positions adopted these beliefs.

Essential to the equity belief philosophy is that teachers believe every student has the ability to achieve. Skrla et al. (2000) quotes a teacher as stating,

I think that one of the things that really has happened in the last five years or so, and it is something that we have always believed in, but I think that more and more we have been working hard on improving the belief that *every kid* will be successful. And it is our job as a whole team, and when I’m talking about whole teams I’m talking about administration, teachers, everyone that’s involved in providing education for the child and their environment. We do everything that’s possible to provide a situation that will encourage learning and enrich environments. (p. 19-20)

J. D. Scribner and Reyes (1999) also noted the shared equity belief philosophy among educators, stating, “These educators never mention that their students are difficult to teach or are deficient in any manner” (p. 200).

According to Skrla et al. (2000), the study districts were located in geographically diverse sites around Texas, and although they had significantly

different degrees and types of diversity among their student populations, stakeholders in the district shared very similar beliefs of educational equity. The district's teachers shared three basic beliefs:

First, all children, regardless of their racial and SES differences, have the capability to learn and succeed at equally high academic levels. Second, it is the responsibility of all the adults in the district to ensure that all of the children succeed academically. Third, equitable and excellent classroom learning is the primary focus of district operations. (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 20)

All children, regardless of their racial and SES differences, have the capability to learn and succeed at equally high academic levels. Skrla et al. (2000) asserted, "District leadership responded ethically by repetitively promulgating the central belief that all children, regardless of differences, would learn at equally high academic levels" (p. 20). Johnson (2002) concurred, suggesting that to produce equally high levels of academic success among all students, administrators must adopt the attitude of "high goals, high standards, high expectations, and accountability for adults and students" (p. 6).

It is the responsibility of all the adults in the district to ensure that all of the children succeed academically. Skrla et al. (2000) noted, "Districts responded by spreading accountability and thus responsibility to all staff. That is, the whole district—at all levels and through all staff—were now focused on and responsible for improving learning for all groups of children" (p. 21). Skrla continued, "Change in attitude was evidenced in a variety of ways in each of the four districts...all staff were soon engaged with the idea that each and every one of them was responsible" (pp. 21-22).



Equitable and excellent classroom learning is the primary focus of successful district operations. Skrla et al. (2000) reported, “Prior to the accountability system, classroom learning was calculated in terms of inputs, such as teacher certification, and in terms of expectations was that academic results would bear resemblance to a bell curve” (p. 22). In other words, whether teachers were successfully teaching all children was not typically the major concern; all teachers were good teachers; district and campus leaders were not responsible for instruction; and academic success was largely (and correctly, according to the assumptions of the time) based on race and SES (Skrla et al., p. 22).

Regrettably, the specific quality of the teaching largely was ignored by the district and even by the principal and, unfortunately, in many cases, by the teachers themselves. With the new accountability system, however, classroom teaching and learning became the primary focus. (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 22)

The importance of attitudes and beliefs of teachers has been well documented in the educational arena. Ashton and Webb (1986) reported,

Teachers’ expectations about students’ ability appear to be the single most influential student characteristic affecting their behavior. If teachers have low expectations of their students’ ability to learn, these low expectations will contribute to a low sense of teacher efficacy and lessened effort in teaching the students they believe to have low ability. (p. 14)

Ashton and Webb (1986) also reported the following:

In contrast, they found that high sense-of-efficacy teachers expressed the importance of developing warm relationships with students and the view that they could take positive actions to avoid problems. High sense-of-efficacy teachers were more likely to demonstrate to students that they care about them and were concerned about their progress and their problems. (p. 75)

Shannon and Bylsma (2002) stated,

Teachers’ attitudes and treatment of students impact achievement, and teachers often treat low income and students of color differently than white

middle-class students. ...This suggests that students of color are more affected by negative as well as positive attitudes and treatment of their teachers. (p. 26)

### *Focused Equity Practices*

Skrla et al. (2000) claimed,

Beliefs in educational equity, no matter how powerful or how compelling, make little difference in the absence of practices that translate those beliefs into day-to-day reality. Each of the four districts developed multiple practices, processes, actions, procedures, policies, and programs designed to deliver on the promise of high expectations. (p. 23)

Beliefs and practices, however, did not operate in these districts in isolation from one another; rather, they were highly consistent, strongly interactive, and mutually reinforcing (Skrla et al.). Skrla et al. reported,

The research team identified eight groups of practices that were shaped to influence, create, support, or reinforce improved instruction for all students. In all cases, these practices were integrated with the shared beliefs so that...they were always intertwined and mutually reinforcing. (p. 23)

Skrla et al. also noted,

Although the language and practice are common in many school districts, the practices took on special meaning—they became tools for infusing equity beliefs into the daily work schedule of schools and classrooms rather than bureaucratic processes which seldom influence the achievement of diverse groups of students. (p. 23)

Finally, Skrla et al. explained, “Without the practices, the beliefs would have been little more than empty slogans” (p. 23). The eight focused equity practices Skrla refers to consist of the following activities (Skrla et al., 2000).

1. Generating, directing, and maintaining focus;
2. Developing and aligning curriculum and delivering instruction;
3. Building and supporting capacity in people to contribute and lead;
4. Acquiring, allocating, and aligning fiscal, human, and material resources;

5. Collecting, interpreting, and using data and monitoring results;
6. Supervising, evaluating, and holding people accountable;
7. Refocusing energies, refining efforts, and ensuring continuous performance; and
8. Creating and nurturing alliances.

*Generating, directing, and maintaining focus.* According to Skrla et al. (2002), in order to generate, direct, and maintain focus, teachers, principals, and support personnel developed a shared common sense of mission and a clear sense of focus and direction. There was a remarkable consistency in the messages transmitted to educators, parents, students, and community members. The message was apparent in district leaders' spoken words and decisions. Specifically, the message made clear the need to improve academic achievement for all groups of children. Skrla et al. noted that the improvement of academic achievement of all children was the primary focus, leaving little to no room for distractions that deter time and energy away from the primary goal. A. P. Scribner (1999) reaffirmed that "high-performing Hispanic schools exhibit a clear, coherent mission that is shared by all members of the community" (p. 12).

*Developing and aligning curriculum and delivering instruction.* The study districts aligned their curriculum and developed focused and coherent practices for the delivery of instruction within that curriculum and linked it with appropriate instructional strategies and assessments (Skrla et al., 2000). In accordance with the new accountability expectations,

...teacher's expectations increased; however, they were not left to flounder under increased pressure to perform. Increased expectations were always

accompanied by support. The districts developed practices that increased the likelihood that each and every teacher would be able to get their students to achieve expected results. (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 26)

*Building and supporting the capacity of people to contribute and lead.* Skrla et al. (2000) described another commonality among the four successful districts: the devotion of the leadership with respect to the amount of time and resources allocated to helping teachers develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary in order to improve instruction for all groups of students. District leadership invested substantial amounts of time and resources to helping administrators develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary in order to support teachers as they worked to improve instruction for all groups of students.

*Acquiring, allocating, and aligning fiscal, human, and material resources.* Skrla et al (2000) explained the change in the way these processes worked from the way they operated under earlier beliefs could be illustrated by the ways in which principals (an important human resource) were hired, promoted, and evaluated. Though personnel decisions, especially those about high school principals, are among the most politically problematic decisions superintendents face, decision-making committees were trained and expected to use their decision-making authority with a primary focus of improved achievement for all groups of students (Skrla et al.).

Resources commonly were the focus of contention in the day-to-day operations of schools. Decisions about resource use often are made politically, expediently, or randomly. However, in the four study districts, decisions involving resource use were made with a clear focus on improving learning for all the students in the district (Skrla et al., 2000).

*Collecting, interpreting, and using data and monitoring results.* Skrla et al. (2000) noted, “The terms ‘data’ and ‘monitoring’ were repeated with great regularity throughout the research in all four districts. Each district had developed its own way of systematizing the utilizing the student performance data” (p. 27). The authors went on to state that the data were shared at many levels. School boards and superintendents discussed data at meetings. Data conversations were expected involving both teachers and administrators. Principals discussed with teachers data for the campus and for each teacher, and the teachers discussed such data with each other. Central office personnel helped campus leaders and teachers use data to focus, plan, and monitor the implementation of their plans. In all of these cases, the data were used to drive improvement efforts (Skrla et al.).

*Supervising, evaluating, and holding people accountable.* Skrla et al. (2000) commented that each district developed specific, local accountability practices, ensuring that everyone involved in the instructional program was held accountable for educational equity and student achievement. Skrla et al. clarified that all districts developed practices for supervising, evaluating, and holding people accountable for practices that contributed positively to the instructional mission of the district. Further, personnel decisions were not based on seniority or personality, but rather on the willingness to pursue excellence and equity in teaching and learning (Skrla et al.).

*Refocusing energies, refining efforts, and ensuring continuous performance.* “All the districts paid careful attention to ensuring that the work of their teachers was paying off in terms of increased student performance” (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 29). Strongly characteristic of these four districts was that they continually sought to

refine and improve their practices and thus to improve student performance. Skrla et al. also noted that administrators and teachers celebrated successes, but they did not rest on them.

*Creating and nurturing alliances.* District leaders created alliances with various organizations and entities with one sole objective: improving instruction for all groups of students. These alliances broadened the districts' ability to encourage and support improved classroom instruction. All four districts formed numerous, active alliances with businesses, community groups and organizations, government agencies, and other educational organizations. Additionally, partnership programs were formally evaluated to maintain focus on academic success for all students (Skrla et al., 2000).

In the "Lessons From High-Performing Hispanic Schools" study, Reyes et al. (1999) discussed the parental involvement piece. A. P. Scribner (1999) brought to light

how parent involvement is carried out has much to do with student age and grade level, size of the school, community needs, and the nature and amount of communication, using strategies that stress personal contact, creating inviting learning environments, initiating opportunities for parent interaction, providing opportunities for formal and informal involvement at school and home, and building on the Mexican American culture, values, and experiences. (p. 13)

Developing, maintaining, and sustaining parental involvement from the parents and the community is a complex phenomenon, particularly because "parents and professional staff have distinctively different views regarding the meaning of parent involvement and different reasons for valuing parent involvement" (A. P. Scribner, 1999, p. 13). Reyes et al. (1999) later emphasized,

On the formal-informal continuum, high-performing Hispanic schools emphasize activities near the end of the continuum that focus on facilitating more direct involvement of the family members in their children's education within the home environment. This appears to be a key factor in facilitating parent contributions to children's increased academic achievement. (p. 38)

### *Proactive Redundancy*

Skrla et al. (2000) explained,

Proactive is taken to mean acting before a need emerges, and redundancy is taken to mean more than one process (i.e., practice, program, procedure, action, or structure) that targets a change of the same practice. Thus, proactive redundancy means designing two or more "processes" whose goal is to change a same specific practice. (p. 30)

Skrla et al. continued, "Proactive redundancy was used as an insurance policy to make certain that classroom instruction would result in learning for all groups of students" (p. 31). Skrla et al. cited three examples of proactive redundancy described below:

Example 1: Suppose a district wants to ensure that teachers are being successful with the children in their classes, it may require principals to visit classes weekly to examine teaching. In addition, they may do targeted monthly testing of some sort to check whether children are learning. This provides two focused processes to ensure that the specified goal—teachers' success with students, in this case—is being accomplished. This is proactive redundancy.

Example 2: A district may require monthly testing of some sort of learning in the classroom and require that principals monthly report these testing results. District personnel, such as an area superintendent, make monthly visit classrooms in the principal's building to check on teaching. In addition, the district may require that instructional specialists, whether housed at the district or the campus level, report monthly to district personnel on teaching practices and efforts to improve those practices on a campus. These multiple measures, then, help to ensure that success is achieved.

Example 3: Proactive redundancy was used to provide principals the support they needed to be effective instructional leaders. Organized into both vertical and horizontal teams, the principals met once a month for leadership capacity building and for delivery of district information. Two simultaneous line of action focused on the same result. Proactive redundancy was used as an

insurance policy to make certain that classroom instruction would result in the learning for all groups of students. (p. 30-31)

### *Positive Support*

Skrla et al. (2000) asserted,

A key ingredient in accomplishing the transformation that these districts have undergone is not understood in many districts. If both fundamental beliefs and teaching practices need to be changed, will this transformation be accomplished primarily through punitive pressures and negative consequences or will it be done primarily through appreciative respect and positive, caring support for those undertaking the change? ...Following what has become obvious in research in organizational studies, these districts understood that an orientation of positive support and caring toward their staff would more likely yield the change that they sought. However, an orientation of positive support and appreciation toward staff by itself is not sufficient. The shared beliefs and the focused practices discussed in prior sections are equally necessary. (p. 31-32)

Skrla et al. (2000) provided an example from Aldine, noting that personnel hired at the district level were to assist teachers in learning to be successful with all children, which meant they had to have strong people skills and to be seen by staff as respectful, supportive, and appreciative. According to the authors, all persons in leadership, from the superintendent through the district staff to the principals, were expected to create an environment of caring support, encouragement, and assistance to ensure that the teachers could be equally successful with all children. This orientation became ingrained into the culture of these districts (Skrla et al.).

### *New Role Directions*

Skrla et al. (2000) stated that the four districts were undergoing a transformation of ideology, as it impacted the manner of conducting school business or the way of doing things. The districts moved away from the “old way” of doing



things that was focused on district operation of inputs and efficiency and employed the “new way” of doing things, focused on accountability and equity. However, the authors stated that the “new way” of doing things required a substantial shift in district personnel roles (p. 33). These shifts are outlined below according to Skrla et al.:

“The superintendent’s new primary role is to keep the main focus on the district and the community on equitable and excellent learning” (Skrla et al., 2002, p. 33). The superintendent must keep the district and community stakeholders focused on learning as the primary business of the district. The primary business of the school district or the “main thing” is the learning and academic achievement of all its students (Skrla et al., p. 33).

“The principal’s chief role is leadership for equitable and excellent learning. Under the old input-oriented accountability system, the principal was primarily a manager of order and efficiency,” handled ultimate student discipline, made sure the heating worked, the building got cleaned, and dealt with parent complaints (Skrla et al., 2002, p. 33). The principal also “made sure all proper procedures and processes were followed correctly” (Skrla et al., p. 33). However, “under the new accountability system, the principal is primarily an instructional leader” (Skrla et al., p. 33). The main focus is now teaching and learning, and the principal’s work is to help her or his teachers be academically successful with all students. Consequently, while the prior assumption was that a principal would manage well, the new assumption is that the principal knows how to motivate positively and assist teachers to improve instruction and learning. “In addition, this new assumption also includes that the principal knows

how to assist teachers in being successful with all students at equally high academic levels” (Skrla et al., p. 34).

The new role of the central office is to support and assist principals and teachers in educating all students. Prior to their transformations, the function of the central office personnel was rule and procedure specification, monitoring, and enforcement, especially as these related to inputs. (Skrla et al., 2002, p. 34)

One of the superintendents described the situation of program directors controlling instructional support budgets as a major obstacle to improving student success. Due to the district’s transformations, the focus of the central office became student learning. The district superintendents understood that the way district personnel could improve student learning was to provide support; the function of central office was no longer to be the “center,” but “to center on providing support for teachers and principals” (Skrla et al., p. 34).

The primary role of the board members is to set goals and establish policies that promote equitable and excellent learning. . . . School boards played an important role by establishing goals that articulated strong beliefs about the importance of getting all students to achieve challenging academic standards. School boards made clear to superintendents that change in student performance was necessary, possible, and expected. (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 34)

The board monitored progress toward the achievement of the goals by continuous discussion at board meetings. The school boards set goals and established policies but left the management decisions to the superintendent and her or his leadership team. The school boards “assumed responsibility, to be pursued through their goals and policies, to ensure that equitable learning is occurring” (Skrla et al., p. 34). The board members worked as a team and

modeled for the entire district a commitment to work together for the benefit of the students. Often they described how they might set aside their personal

agendas in the interest of helping the board establish policies that were likely to promote equitable and excellent learning. (Skrla et al., p. 35)

Srkla et al. (2002) also pointed out,

The school district and community are integral to each other and must work together to support equitable student learning. . . . Many districts try to protect themselves from the parents and the other members of their communities or, at least, to maintain a controlled distance from parents. (Skrla et al., 2002, p. 35)

However, in these districts the leadership at several levels persistently sought out the participation of their communities. “This commitment to full participation in the schooling process by parents and community members was illustrated by a wide range of programs. . . . A shared belief emerged that the district and its community . . . must unite to deliver equitable learning (Skrla et al., p. 36).

The “Lessons From High-Performing Hispanic Schools” study (Reyes et al., 1999) divulged similar leadership roles and themes. “Several distinct themes common to all the schools emerged from the data. These themes reflected patterns of governance, styles of leadership, and patterns of administrative support common in effective schools along the [Texas–Mexico] border)” (Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 1999, p. 19). The themes were categorized as the following: (a) communication and collaboration among administrators, professional staff, and the community; (b) a clear and coherent vision and mission; (c) leadership styles of effective administrators; (d) humanistic leadership; (e) empowerment of professional staff, parents, and the community; (f) importance of professional development; (g) an ethic of care; (h) success for all; (h) an emphasis on accountability; and (i) a culture of innovation.

In the “Lessons From High-Performing Hispanic Schools” study (Reyes et al., 1999), schools were “allowed to be visionary islands comprising individuals who

replaced dogma of managing, organizing, and controlling with the new dogma of vision, values, and mental models” (J. D. Scribner & Reyes, 1999, p. 196). Some of the lessons resulting from the study are consistent with the practices and ideology of the “Equity-Driven Achievement-Focused School Districts” (Skrla et al., 2000) study. The practices and ideology include the following:

1. The human potential of all involved with the high-performing learning community takes precedence over traditional notions of bureaucracy.
2. Everyone is willing to engage in and to be held accountable for innovative practices that will improve learning conditions for their students.
3. All members of the learning community are empowered to make fundamental decisions about what is to be done to ensure student success.
4. Because leadership is a pervasive concept shared by all, all members of the learning community became self-actualized.
5. An essential function of collaborative governance and leadership is the principal’s capacity to communicate meaning and to inspire people to become active participants in collegial and collaborative processes.

The transformation of a school or school district at all levels is a difficult but possible task. The “old way” of doing things entailed assumptions, beliefs, and practices that support a deficit model. The “new way” of doing things or the new ideology embraces a high-performance equity model with inspiring assumptions, beliefs, and practices that lead to equitable academic success for all students. Sonny Donaldson, then Aldine ISD superintendent, placed emphasis on the purpose, mission, and focus of public education school districts: “The main thing is to keep the

main thing the main thing...student learning” (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 33) of all students regardless of race or background.

### **The Deficit Thinking Model**

Researcher, professor, and educator Richard Valencia contended deficit thinking is the dominant paradigm that shapes U.S. educators’ explanations for widespread and persistent school failure among children from low-income homes and children of color (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001, p. 235). Valencia (1997) explained,

The deficit thinking paradigm, as a whole, posits that student who fail in school do so because of alleged internal deficiencies (such as cognitive and/or motivational limitations) or shortcomings socially linked to the youngster—such as familial deficits and dysfunctions. ...The popular “at-risk” construct, now entrenched in educational circles, views poor and working class children (typically of color) as predominantly responsible for school failure. (p. xi)

The deficit-thinking model suggests, “The internal deficits or deficiencies are manifest, it is alleged, in limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation to learn and immoral behavior” (Valencia, 1997, p. 2). Valencia went on to state that the deficit-thinking model is “grounded in classism and racism and offers counterproductive educational prescriptions for school success” (p. 2). In this particular model the victim is at fault, not other factors such as the system or other constituents.

The deficit-thinking concept is not new and has been explored by other individuals. In 1971, Ryan first named the concept of deficit thinking. In his book, *Blaming the Victim*, Ryan transcended deficit thinking beyond the educational arena and examined the social structure as a whole. Ryan explained that blaming the victim is an ideological process, “a set of ideas and concepts deriving from systematically

motivated, but unintended, distortions of reality” (p. 10). Within the educational arena, the deficit thinking belief system perceives ELLs, students of color, and economically disadvantaged students as “less competent, less skilled, less knowing—in short, less human” (Ryan, p. 9).

A popular saying or adage of educational institutions and its constituents is that all children can learn. However, “Valencia argues that ‘deficit thinking is deeply embedded in educational thought and practice and that it pervades schools that serve children from low-income homes and children of color’” (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001, p. 236). Records show that underachieving academically has been consistent and pervasive among a substantial proportion of students of color and of low SES. These deficit views of the ability to educate students of color or economically disadvantaged students are seen throughout the educational system that results in these students

overwhelmingly tracked into low-level classes, identified for special education classes, segregated based on their home language, subjected to more and harsher disciplinary actions, pushed out of the system and labeled “dropouts,” under identified as “gifted and talented,” immersed in negative and “subtractive” school climates, and sorted in a plethora of “remedial,” “compensatory,” or “special” programs. (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001, p. 236)

The deficit thinking perception was utilized as a permissible manner to explain the educational achievement inequities as the norm and predestined. Ryan (1971) explained, “The norms themselves are taken as givens, and no effort is made to examine them. Nor is there any thought given to the manner in which norms might themselves contribute to the development of the problems” (p. 13). Historically,

deficit thinking has remained the dominant, unchallenged paradigm that school district leaders have used to explain to others or make sense to themselves of the “persistent, pervasive, and disproportionate” underachievement in school of children of color and children from low-income homes. (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001, p. 238)

Educators are reluctant to recognize themselves as part of the problem; therefore, they are reluctant to look for solutions within the educational system itself (Garcia & Guerra, 2004).

### *The Deficit Thinking Cycle*

Valencia (1997) described educators' deficit views as a "description-explanation-prediction-prescription" cycle in public schools (p. 7). He elaborated with four stages in the cycle.

1. First, educators describe the deficits, limitations, deficiencies, or shortcomings of students of color and economically disadvantaged students.
2. Educators provide explanations of the deficits by crediting the deficiencies to dysfunctional families or limited intelligence and motivation.
3. Educators make predictions surrounding the perpetuation and accumulation of the deficit attributes.
4. In the final stage of prescription, educators design educational interventions to remedy the deficits (Valencia, 1997).

This cycle is not only common in today's public schools but also continues to self-perpetuate among educational leaders and constituents (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). By design, schools produce failures among economically disadvantaged students and students of color and then "use the failure as evidence that the 'problem' lies with/in the children, their families, their neighborhoods, their genetics, their social capital, and so forth rather than with the educational system and its deficit assumptions" (Skrla & Scheurich, pp. 237-238). The authors provided the example of

a superintendent of schools with a deficit thinking view and how this could permeate the entire educational organization. It is imperative that educational leaders sincerely believe that all children can learn.

Despite the deficit thinking views among educators, several Texas schools and school districts have accomplished impressive results for students of color, economically disadvantaged students, and students with diverse qualities and backgrounds. These achievements have taken place within the last decade and further reinforce the notion that a goal of equitable academic success among all students is attainable. Preliminary research has indicated that superintendents in these districts have found methods to resist or displace deficit thinking in an effort to demonstrate progress toward educational equity (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). Even though deficit-thinking views have not been eliminated completely among all educators, leaders in successful schools and districts have concentrated efforts to equitable academic achievement by all students and have reinforced their commitment to equity and social justice.

### *Displacing Deficit Thinking Among Educators*

Educational reform efforts often appear to come to a halt because educators are unwilling to assume responsibility for students' low achievement and failure (Berman & Chambliss, 1999, as cited by Garcia & Guerra, 2004). Further, Berman and Chambliss (1999, as cited by Garcia & Guerra) stated, "Efforts to raise achievement were hindered by school districts' and educators' tendencies to place the problem within the student (and family) or within the school, without examining the



links between the school practices and student outcomes” (pp. 150–51). According to Garcia and Guerra, student underachievement may be a derivative of their families and intellectual abilities. These students enter school without the necessary prior knowledge or the parental support needed to be academically successful.

Sociocultural disparities between educators and students are misunderstandings, and the resulting conflict is usually amplified. Professional development focused on equity-oriented pedagogy becomes a critical factor in the process of displacing deficit thinking among educators. However, staff development is more likely to be effective amid ongoing, sustained efforts that give teachers opportunities to examine their beliefs and assumptions about culture and education (Betsinger, Garcia, & Guerra, 2001).

Garcia and Guerra (2004) examined a framework that identifies five underlying assumptions:

1. Deficit thinking permeates society; schools and teacher mirror these beliefs.
2. Professional development in diversity is not just for White educators.
3. Intercultural communication permeates every aspect of schooling.
4. Cultural sensitivity and awareness does not automatically result in equity practices.
5. Professional development activities must systematically and explicitly link equity knowledge to classroom practice. (p. 154)

Although there is a need for further research to formulate steps of action to displace deficit thinking, examples of equitable academic achievement continue to emerge. In Reyes et al.’s 1999 study of superintendents of four highly successful Texas school districts (Aldine ISD, Brazosport ISD, San Benito Consolidated ISD, and Wichita Falls ISD, discussed earlier in this section), researchers identified five

methods where accountability standards operated to accomplish the substantial displacement of deficit thinking:

1. Provide highly visible, irrefutable evidence, which could not be ignored, that the districts were *not* serving all children equally well;
2. Shift the political risk inherent in confronting racial and socioeconomic class educational inequity and mandate improved performance for all student group away from the district leadership to the state department of education;
3. Force the superintendents to seek out exemplars of successful classrooms and schools for children of color and children from low-income homes and thus, to grow as instructional leaders;
4. Cause superintendent to reevaluate deficit views and develop anti-deficit orientations to district leadership; and
5. Drive ever-increasing expectations of and higher goals for academic achievement for all children as incremental success was experienced. (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001, p. 243)

### **Discourse Framework**

In order to predict what will happen next, we are often required to construct mental models, or internal thinking representations of external realities (Halpern, 2000). An individual forms the mental model by filtering information and by interpreting that information through different lenses, influences, and experiences. This information is our discourse or language, one of our methods of communication and survival. Though the framework of discourse, the researcher is granted the opportunity of hearing the teachers provide their definition of a quality teacher. It is this researcher's contention that the discourse of the teacher in need of improvement will differ from the discourse of a teacher not in need of improvement. If this is the case, it is not an attitude that defines or composes the quality level of the teachers, but the way in which the teachers interpret the world. Discourse is an important aspect for the way individuals, as well as groups, interpret the world. The review of the

literature focused on two researchers' approaches. Work by Bakhtin (1981), a Russian philosophical anthropologist, brings a social view of language to the theoretical framework, whereas the work of Gee (1989, 1990, 1992, 1997), an American linguist, brings a linguistic perspective to his unique theory of Discourse (with a capital "D").

Bakhtin (1981) subscribed to the view of discourse as "a social phenomenon—social throughout its entire range and in each and every one of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning" (p. 259). A discourse, according to Bakhtin, facilitates the construction of a worldview, which insures a "maximum of mutual understanding" (p. 271).

As an individual interacts with the discourse or language, a dialogic relationship ensues. It is through "the process of living interaction with the discourse that the language becomes individualized" and takes shape for the individual. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 276). "Responsive understanding," Bakhtin wrote, "is a fundamental force, one that participates in the formulation of discourse, and it is moreover an active understanding" (pp. 280-281).

It is not easy for an individual passively to adopt a discourse or language and have a commanding comprehension of it. "A passive understanding...is not understanding at all, it is only the abstract aspect of meaning" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 281). Bakhtin explained,

Every concrete act of understanding is active: it assimilates the work to be understood into its own conceptual system filled with specific objects and emotional expressions, and is indissolubly merged with the response. ...Primacy belongs to the understanding it prepares the ground for an active and engaged understanding. Understanding comes to fruition only in the response. Understanding and responding are dialectically merged and

mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other. ...An active understanding, on that assimilated the work under consideration into a new conceptual system, that of the one striving to understand, establishes a series of complex relationships, consonances and dissonances with the word and enriches it with new elements. (p. 282)

As the individual develops an understanding of the discourse, he or she begins to “knit together with specific points of view, specific approaches, forms of thinking, nuances and accents characteristics” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 289). The professional discourse not only takes on a shared vocabulary, but also assumes “intentional dimensions”; that is, the discourses can drive the social practice of the individual (Bakhtin, p. 289).

In order to develop an understanding and accommodate a specific discourse, first “one’s own discourse is gradually and slowly wrought out of others’ words that have been acknowledged and assimilated, and the boundaries between the two are at first scarcely perceptible” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345). Bakhtin explained that if the individual encounters an internally persuasive discourse and enters into a dialogic relationship with it, the discourse becomes tightly interwoven with one’s own words. The internally persuasive discourse, according to Bakhtin, is half the individual’s and half someone else’s. The individual actively engages in evaluating the discourse and through evaluation develops understanding.

Understanding is impossible without evaluation. Understanding cannot be separated from evaluation: they are simultaneous and constitute a unified integral act. The person who understands approaches the work with his own already formed worldview, from his own viewpoint, from his own position. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 142)

As the individual engages in a dialogical encounter, through evaluation and the development of understanding, the internally persuasive discourse opens or

awakens new and independent possibilities (Bakhtin, 1981). The “structure of an internally persuasive discourse is not finite, it is open; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it, this discourse is able to reveal ever newer ways to mean” (Bakhtin, p. 346). Through a dialogic relationship an individual is able to acquire a professional discourse, which becomes his or her own.

Gee (1989) broadened the concept of discourse with his own theory of Discourse (capital “D”). He expanded the concept of language past the spoken word to include multiple ways of interacting. Gee (1989) defined discourse (with a lower case “d”) as connected to stretches of language. Gee (1989, 1992, 1997) developed a theory of Discourse (with a capital “D”) that encompasses a wide range of meaning. “Discourses are composed of people, of objects, and of characteristic ways of talking, acting, interacting, thinking, believing, and valuing, and sometimes characteristic ways of writing, reading, and/or interpreting” (Gee, 1992, p. 20). Discourses are a “way of being in the world, they are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes” (Gee, 1989, pp. 6-7). Gee (1990) maintained that people all have many discourses, observing, “A Discourse is a sort of ‘identity kit’ which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, as to take on a particular role that others will recognize” (p. 142).

Discourses are acquired through social practices. The primary Discourse is acquired through a primary socializing group, such as a member of a family unit. The primary Discourse is the discourse an individual uses first to “make sense of the world and to interact with others” (Gee, 1989, p. 7). Parts of an individual’s primary

Discourse become a “carrier or foundations for Discourses acquired later in life” (Gee, 1989, p. 8).

As the individual interacts beyond the family unit, he or she acquires other secondary Discourses from other social communities, institutions, groups, and organizations. Memberships in these different types of social entities often demands particular Discourses. An individual’s primary Discourse may be compatible or incompatible with the secondary Discourses. In many cases different Discourses, whether primary or secondary, can interfere with each other. In some cases, aspects of one Discourse can be transferred to another Discourse (Gee, 1989, 1992, 1997).

The exposure to different Discourses does not mean that the individual simply absorbs, accepts, or assimilates to the various Discourses. The individual’s mind looks for patterns in the world, and the mind is a “flexible and adaptable pattern recognizer” (Gee, 1997, p. 236). The Discourses an individual possesses can act as a guide in both the recognition and selection of patterns. Discourses can become connecting devices between the discourse community and the patterns in the world, “nudging” individuals toward some norm (Gee, 1992).

A Discourse is personified in the individual’s social practice, and how the Discourse is revealed depends on the individual’s social practice. Individuals in a discourse community may hold similar or “converging theories” (Gee, 1992, p. 49), but they are not identical for a number of reasons. First, each individual belongs to multiple sociocultural groups, and therefore different Discourses and the cultural models and patterns associated with each group can influence the individual in unique ways, depending on the different mix of Discourses (Gee, 1997). Second, each

individual is biologically and, in particular, naturally quite different from every other individual, and these biological and brain differences influence how Discourses are both structured and embodied in an individual's thinking, behaviors, and social practices (Gee, 1997).

When an individual selects a profession, becomes educated, and becomes socialized into the profession, she or he learns to speak, think, and act like a member of that profession (Gee, 1992). Upon becoming a member of that profession or a professional, the individual masters the Discourse of that profession. Mastering the professional discourse is based on (a) how well the individual's primary Discourse lays a foundation for acceptance of the professional, secondary Discourses; (b) how the individual's other secondary Discourses complement the professional discourse; and (c) how the individual's unique biological composition and brain structure influence the construction of the discourses (Gee, 1992). Bakhtin's (1981) theory of discourse discussed how the individual accommodates the worldview of his or her chosen professional discourse.

### **Summary**

This chapter has presented a review of the literature. It has provided a brief description of curriculum practices for educating ELLs; the theoretical frameworks for accomplishing equitable academic success among all student groups in two studies on Texas school districts; the deficit-thinking model and its position in the achievement of students of color, ELLs, and low-SES students; and a framework on discourse linking thoughts and behaviors. The review of this literature has provided a better understanding of ELLs and their cultural differences, the educational struggle

of social and political processes, and how some practices may impact negatively or positively the equitable academic achievement of ELLs. This review also serves to provide context for the greater comprehension of why ELLs are continuing to be underserved by the U.S. educational system and continue to underachieve, generating an academic achievement gap. Moreover, this literature review was designed to highlight the moral and ethical responsibility of policymakers, educational leaders, and teachers to become effective practitioners who continually use quantitative and qualitative data to improve the quality of their responsibilities to all the children in public schools. Furthermore, this literature review serves to promote meaningful, thoughtful, educational dialogue surrounding the factors that influence the academic achievement gap experienced by the ELLs compared to other student subgroups.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This qualitative case study at E.P.I.S.D. employed a descriptive design. With a focus on analyzing the EPISD organization with detail and in-depth understanding, qualitative, grounded theory was selected as the research paradigm. Definitions surrounding what a case study is vary, ranging from formal statements to simplistic assertions. For instance, a case study has been defined in a formal sense as an “intensive or complete examination of a facet, an issue, or perhaps the events of a geographic setting over time” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 360). Yet, more simplistic assertions have described case studies as “a slice of life” and “depth examination of an instance” (Lincoln & Guba, p. 360). A case study can be written for a variety of purposes, including to render and to teach, which best portray the rationale for this case study.

The methodology employed in this case study, Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA), is a systems approach to qualitative research that identifies relationships among self-identified components of an issue. Designed to minimize the involvement of the researcher while providing the participants an extraordinary degree of freedom, IQA seeks to capture the lived reality of people, actively engaging participants in the mapping of their stories. The qualitative IQA method is selected for this study because of its ability to produce significant data in a short timeframe that then can be utilized for decision-making in strategic planning and implementation of change.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence the academic achievement of ELLs at the high school level, in the form of a mind map. One mind map will be the perceptions of high school teachers producing high-performing ELLs, as this mind map identifies the components of the education of ELLs and how they are linked. The other mind map will be the perceptions of high school teachers producing low-performing ELLs. Additionally, the study is designed to compare and contrast relationships among the mind maps and how they influence the academic achievement of ELLs. This study will accomplish this by using a qualitative research approach and employing an IQA methodology that actively engages constituents in reflective, meaningful discourse surrounding a phenomenon of interests, resulting in rich, detailed, intensive, and comprehensive data that can be utilized for decision-making in strategic planning and implementation of change. The IQA process and analysis serves as a needs assessment technique on how to better serve ELLs.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the mind map of high school teachers in producing a high-performing ELL?
2. What is the mind map of high school teachers in producing a low-performing ELL?
3. How does the mind map of teachers producing high-performing ELLs compare to the mind map of teachers producing low-performing ELLs?

### **Research Design: Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA)**

The research technique of IQA will be employed to obtain the qualitative data. Developed by Northcutt and McCoy at The University of Texas at Austin, IQA focuses on social systems, or “systems in which human interpretation of meaning is involved” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 40). With an interest in creating a *quilt of meaning*, as symbolized by Northcutt & McCoy, IQA utilizes “systematic facilitation of group processes and...systematic representation of the discourse created by the group” (p. 43).

Designed as both a deductive and inductive systems approach to qualitative research, IQA

allow[s] a group to create its own “interpretive quilt,” and then to similarly construct individual quilts of meaning: Together, the two levels of meaning are used by the investigator as the foundation for interpretation. The quilt is represented as a system of patches (affinities) held together by stitches (relationships among affinities). (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 43)

IQA participants perform the initial steps of analysis by organizing their discourse into categories of meaning called *affinities* and by articulating their own perceived relationships of influence among the affinities. The “affinities defined by the group are then used to develop a protocol for interview, which are invaluable to further explore the meanings of the affinities and their systemic relationships” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 45). Three primary questions are addressed:

1. What does this mean to you?
2. What led to this?
3. What are the results?

From the interview data, a comprehensive system diagram is developed to explain the phenomenon. In the final report, the researcher describes the affinities and their relationships, makes comparisons among systems and individuals, and makes inferences (predictions) based on the properties of the systems. Figure 4 is a diagram of the flow of a typical IQA project.

### **IQA Focus Group Data**

#### *Focus Group Participants*

An IQA focus group is a group of individuals “who share some common experience, work or live within some common structure, or have a similar background” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 47). The focus group undoubtedly may include individuals who have “varied opinions and experiences with the system under study but who more critically share a common perspective” (Northcutt & McCoy, p. 47). In this study, the focus group participants will include 20 – 24 high school teachers selected by the superintendent or superintendent’s designee as having or not having success with ELL students.

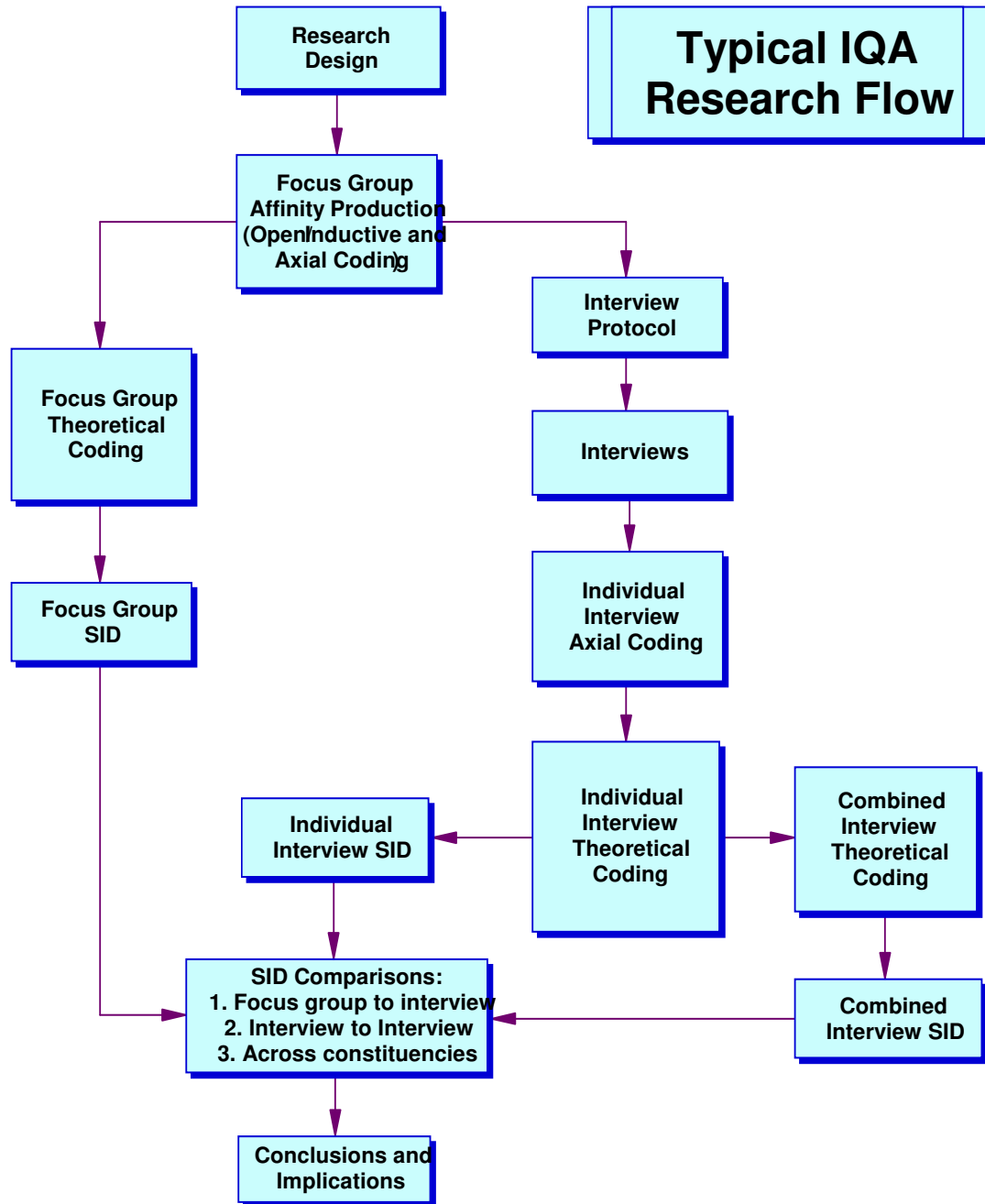


Figure 4. Typical interactive qualitative analysis (IQA) research flow.

The IQA data collection technique aids the participants, who are closest to the phenomenon of interest, in describing and labeling their experiences and in articulating perceived relationships among these experiences to produce a theory in

perception, or conceptual map, which is a systems representation of how a person or group of individuals understands a particular phenomenon.

### *Identification of Factors (Affinities)*

Silent brainstorming is the first step for each of the IQA focus groups. During this phase, the members of each focus group are asked to write their experiences or thoughts on individual note cards. The focus groups will meet on separate days, but each will be prompted as follows:

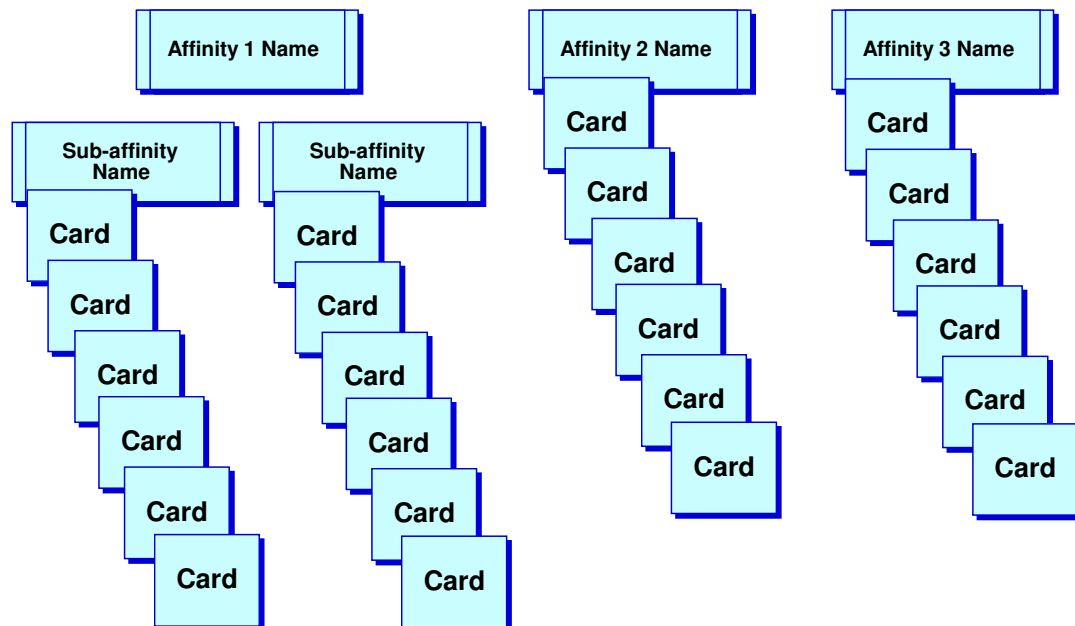
Please take a few moments to think about your achievement results, the gains, the setbacks, the challenges and the barriers in working with the ELL student population. Think about the overall system, the factors in our district that promote, support, and/or impede the performance of the ELL student. Think about the programs, initiatives, people, groups, resources, interactions, perceptions, and intentions that come into play. Use the note cards to brainstorm as many factors as you can. Use one note card per thought/factor.

After producing as many cards as possible, the members are asked to tape their note cards along a wall. The facilitator/researcher reads each card aloud for consensus on the meaning of the card or for clarification. The group is then asked to engage in an activity referred to as *inductive coding*, where the group silently organizes the cards into groups of meaning.

### *Axial Coding*

Following *inductive coding*, *axial coding* is performed. Axial coding is the naming, reorganizing, clarifying, and refining of the affinities. The participants sort any cards that may have been miscategorized initially into a more appropriate group and complete the affinity naming process. With the aid of the facilitator, the

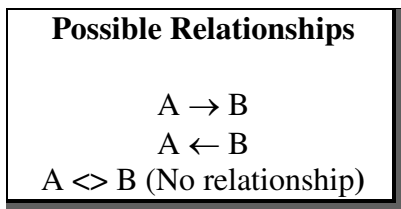
collective thoughts of the group are organized into common themes or affinities, manageable in number, named by the group. Major categories of affinities are reviewed and may be combined or divided into hierarchical systems of sub affinities. During this affinity production process, the participants have the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and to express their views on the subject, as seeking the greatest amount of detail or richness in the data is the primary objective at this stage in the process. Through group discussion and consensus, the descriptions are refined and narrowed by the group until each participant agrees that the affinity name accurately represents the data. The affinities are given titles determined by the participants, which are listed at the top of the column of data it represents. Figure 5 is a visual representation of the process involved in identifying the factors and affinities.



*Figure 5.* The axial coding process of identifying factors and affinities using note cards.

### *Identifying Relationships Among Factors*

After the affinities have been identified clearly by the group, the group analyzes the nature of the relationships between each of the affinities. All possible pairs must be analyzed according to only three possibilities: (a)  $A \rightarrow B$ , (b)  $B \rightarrow A$ , or (c) no relationship, as shown in Figure 6.



*Figure 6.* Illustrates the three possible relationships between affinities or factors.

The group is asked to produce a matrix containing all the perceived relationships in the system into an affinity relationship table (ART). Participants are asked to complete an ART, which is a matrix containing all perceived relationships in the system. Theoretical coding, or the perceived cause-and-effect relationships (influences) among all affinities in a system, is performed using the “If...then...” hypothesis. A sample ART for six affinities is illustrated in Table 5.



Table 5  
*Sample Affinity Relationship Table (ART)*

Sample ART
Affinity pair relationship
1 $\leftarrow$ 2
1 $\leftarrow$ 3
1 $\rightarrow$ 4
1 $\leftarrow$ 5
1 $\leftarrow$ 6
2 $\rightarrow$ 3
2 $\leftarrow$ 4
2 $\rightarrow$ 5
2 $\diamond$ 6
3 $\diamond$ 4
3 $\leftarrow$ 5
3 $\diamond$ 6
4 $\diamond$ 5
4 $\leftarrow$ 6
5 $\leftarrow$ 6

### *Theoretical Coding*

*Constructing the Interrelationship Diagram (IRD).* In an effort to examine links between the affinities, the focus group is asked to engage in *theoretical coding*, an activity where the group develops statements of cause and effect, or propositions, from their derived data. The participants are to determine if a direct cause–effect relationship exists or if no relationship exists between all the affinities. The resulting table is termed an IRD. The IRD for a six-affinity system is represented in Table 6.

Table 6

*Tabular Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) for a Six-Affinity System*

Tabular IRD									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									

For each affinity, the relationship is recorded twice on an IRD using arrows that point only left or up. All relationships are recorded twice on the IRD to represent the relationship, once with an up arrow and once with a left arrow. For instance, the relationship between Affinity 1 and 3, using the IRD in Table 7 below, shows  $1 \leftarrow 3$  and  $3 \uparrow 1$ ; both are read as “Affinity 3 influences Affinity 1.”

Table 7

*Tabular Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) Showing Affinity 3 Influences Affinity 1*

Tabular IRD									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
1		$\leftarrow$	$\leftarrow$	$\uparrow$	$\leftarrow$	$\leftarrow$			
2	$\uparrow$		$\uparrow$	$\leftarrow$	$\uparrow$				
3	$\uparrow$	$\leftarrow$			$\leftarrow$				
4	$\leftarrow$	$\uparrow$				$\leftarrow$			
5	$\uparrow$	$\leftarrow$	$\uparrow$			$\leftarrow$			
6	$\uparrow$			$\uparrow$	$\uparrow$				

The completion of an IRD involves the counting of *Outs* and *Ins* and the calculation of delta ( $\Delta$ ) using the following guidelines:

1. *Outs* = the total number of up arrows ( $\uparrow$ )
2. *Ins* = the total number of left arrows ( $\leftarrow$ )
3.  $\Delta = \text{Outs} - \text{Ins}$

Table 8 shows the completion of an IRD and the calculation of  $\Delta$ .

Table 8

*Completion of an Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) Table and the Calculation of Outs, Ins, and Delta ( $\Delta$ )*

Tabular IRD									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
1		←	←	↑	←	←	1	4	-3
2	↑		↑	←	↑		3	1	2
3	↑	←			←		1	2	-1
4	←	↑				←	1	2	-2
5	↑	←	↑			←	2	2	0
6	↑			↑	↑		3	0	3

After performing the calculations, the IRD is sorted in descending order by delta ( $\Delta$ ). See Table 9.

Table 9

*Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) Table Sorted in Descending Order by Delta ( $\Delta$ )*

Tabular IRD – Sorted in descending order of $\Delta$									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
6	↑			↑	↑		3	0	3
2	↑		↑	←	↑		3	1	2
5	↑	←	↑			←	2	2	0
3	↑	←			←		1	2	-1
4	←	↑				←	1	2	-1
1		←	←	↑	←	←	1	4	-3

Depending on the value of delta, affinities are categorized as relative drivers, relative effects, primary drivers, secondary drivers, circulators/pivots, secondary outcomes, or primary outcomes. An affinity is considered a *relative driver*, or cause, if the value of delta is positive. A *relative effect*, or outcome, is an affinity with a negative delta value. An affinity with a high positive delta value or one that has many Outs but no Ins is a *primary driver*. An affinity labeled as a primary driver is

described to be a significant cause that affects many other affinities but is not affected by others. If an affinity has no Ins, it is always categorized as a primary driver. A *secondary driver*, or a relative cause or influence on affinities in the system, is identified when there exists both Outs and Ins and there are more Outs than Ins. *Circulators/pivots* are identified when there exists an equal number of Outs and Ins and indicate a position in the middle of the system, the pivot point, if you will, in the final visual representation of the system. The *secondary outcome*, or relative effect, is identified where exists both Outs and Ins, but more Ins than Outs. Finally, a *primary outcome* is marked by a high negative delta value, which results from many Ins but no Outs, and is known to have a significant effect caused by many of the affinities, but does not affect others. An affinity with no Outs is always a primary outcome.

From the previous example and using the definitions outlined above, the affinities, in descending order by delta, would be identified as shown in Table 10.

This is termed a system influence diagram (SID).

Table 10  
*Tentative System Influence Diagram (SID) Assignments*

Tentative SID assignments		$\Delta$
6	Primary driver	3
2	Secondary driver	2
5	Circulator/pivot	0
3	Secondary outcome	-1
4	Secondary outcome	-1
1	Primary outcome	-3

*Constructing the system influence diagram (SID).* The value of delta is significant is determining the tentative placement of affinities in the SID. The affinities are placed according to their SID assignments listed above: primary drivers

are placed to the left of the screen, the primary outcomes to the right; secondary drivers and secondary outcomes are to be placed between the primaries. The circulator or pivot, as the name suggests, is the pivot point or middle position of the system. Given these parameters, the SID shown in Figure 7 corresponds to the above example.

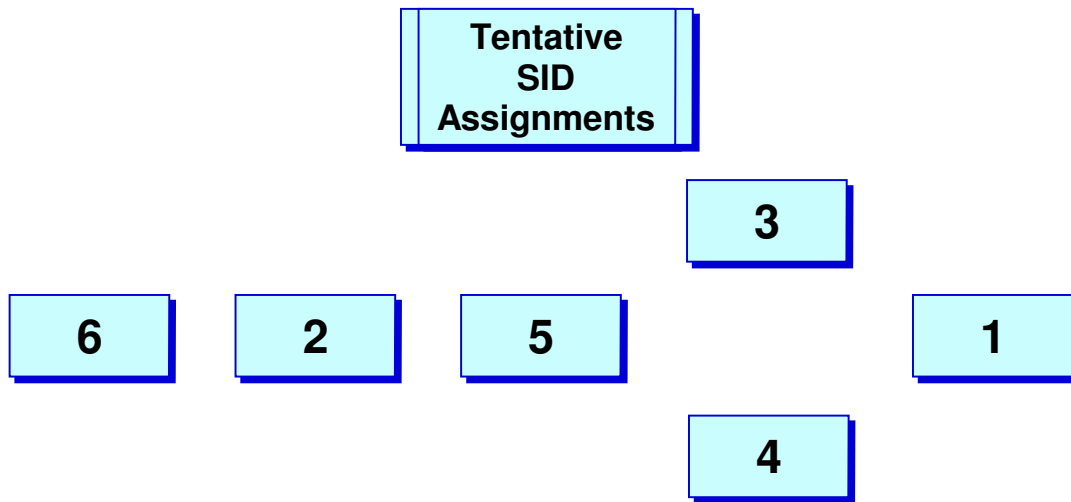
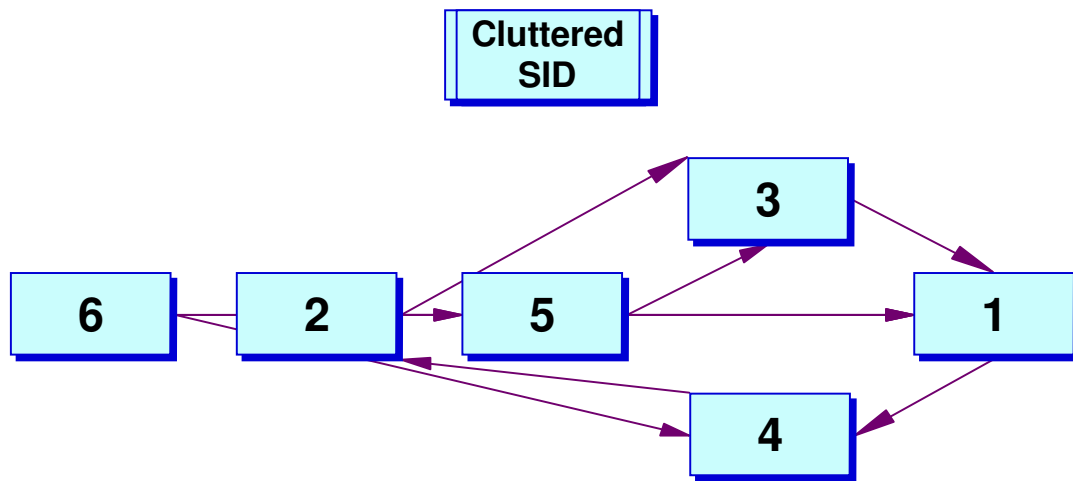


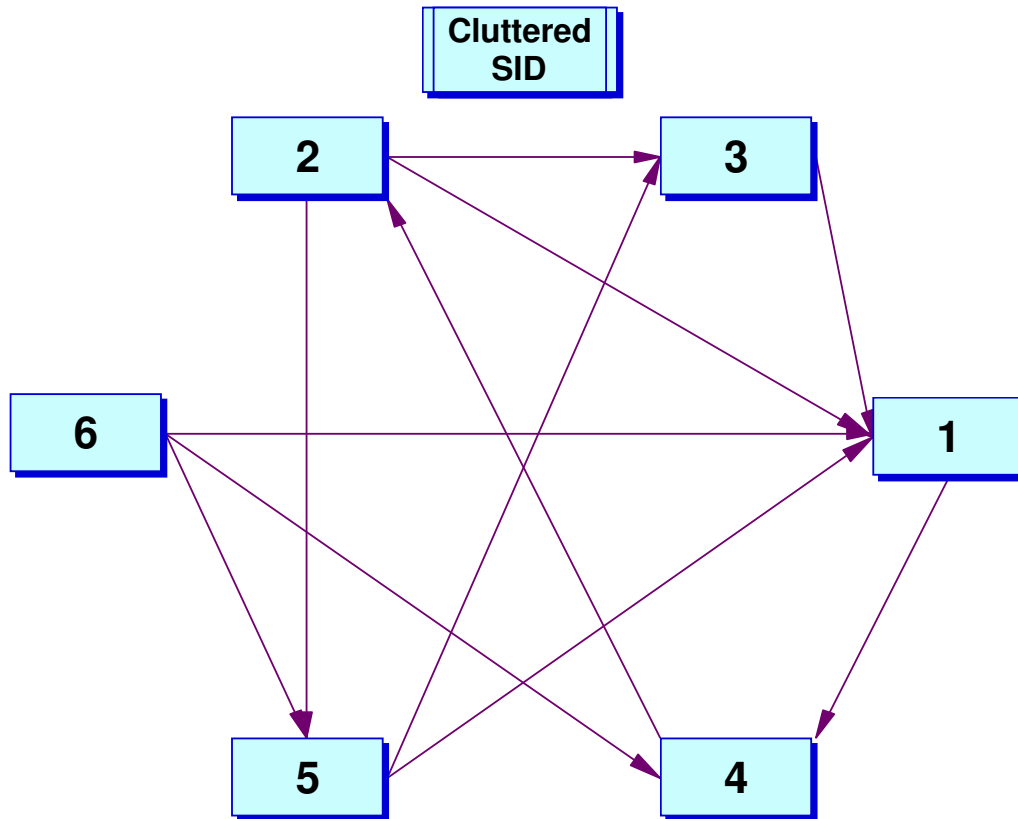
Figure 7. Tentative system influence diagram (SID) assignments based on Table 10.

The focus group constructs an SID or “a visual representation of an entire system of influences and outcomes” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 48). The resulting *mindmap* “is roughly analogous to a set of *qualitative structural equations* or as a path diagram; however, it is distinguished from traditional path diagrams in that recursion or feedback loops are allowed” (Northcutt & McCoy, p. 48). Differing from other system applications, IQA allows for recursion or feedback loops. In fact, they are particularly significant, as they indicate that the drivers influence outcomes, which in turn influence previous affinities.

To represent the relationships between the affinities, arrows are drawn according to the IRD data table. A *cluttered SID* is one with all links drawn. Using the previous example, the cluttered SID is represented below in two fashions. Figure 8 illustrates flat topological zones, and Figure 9 shows the circular fashion.



*Figure 8.* Cluttered system influence diagram (SID), flat topological zone style.



*Figure 9.* Cluttered system influence diagram (SID), circular style.

A circular cluttered SID makes it easier to identify and remove redundant links, or links between two affinities in which, even if removed, a path from the driver to the outcome can be achieved through an intermediary affinity. It may be helpful to think of redundant links as the “paths of least resistance.” For instance, in the cluttered SID above, Affinity 6 influences Affinities 1, 4, and 5. A close examination of the SID reveals that Affinity 6 influences Affinity 1 mediated by Affinities 5 and 3; therefore the link between Affinities 6 and 1 can be removed. The central theorem of IQA representation is as follows: Given any set of affinities and a set of binary unidirectional relationships among these, there exists one, and only one, uncluttered SID.

A *clean SID* is the final version or representation of the mindmap. A clean SID contains “only the minimum number of links required to completely represent the underlying logic of the IRD” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 180). What results is a simpler, more interpretable mental model—one that has optimum explanatory power. Figure 10 shows the clean SID for the cluttered SID shown in Figures 8 and 9. The light blue arrows are the redundant links that were eliminated. Finally, Figure 11 is the *clean SID* in its final version, with all redundant links eliminated.

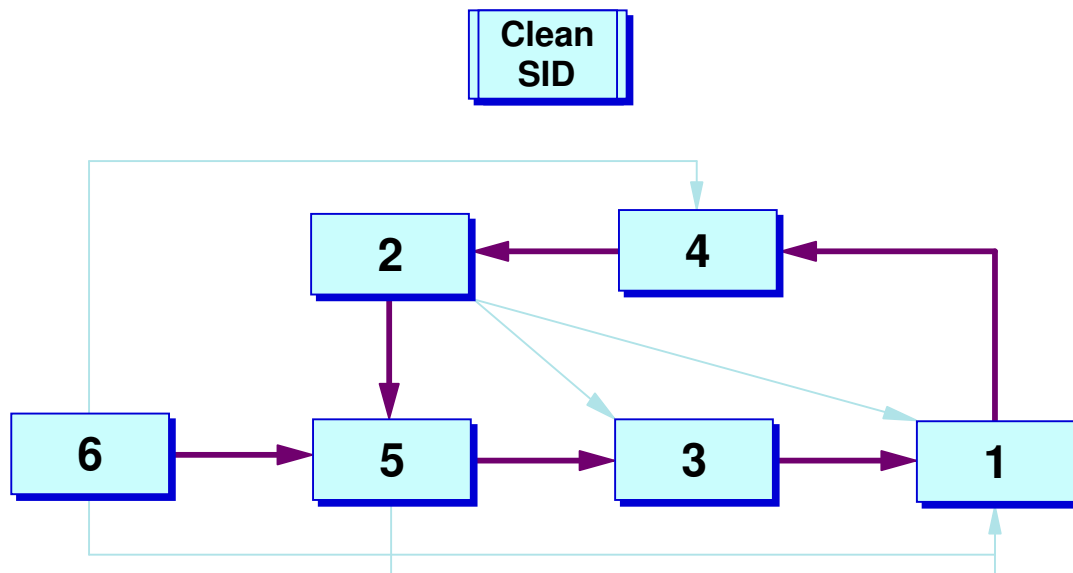
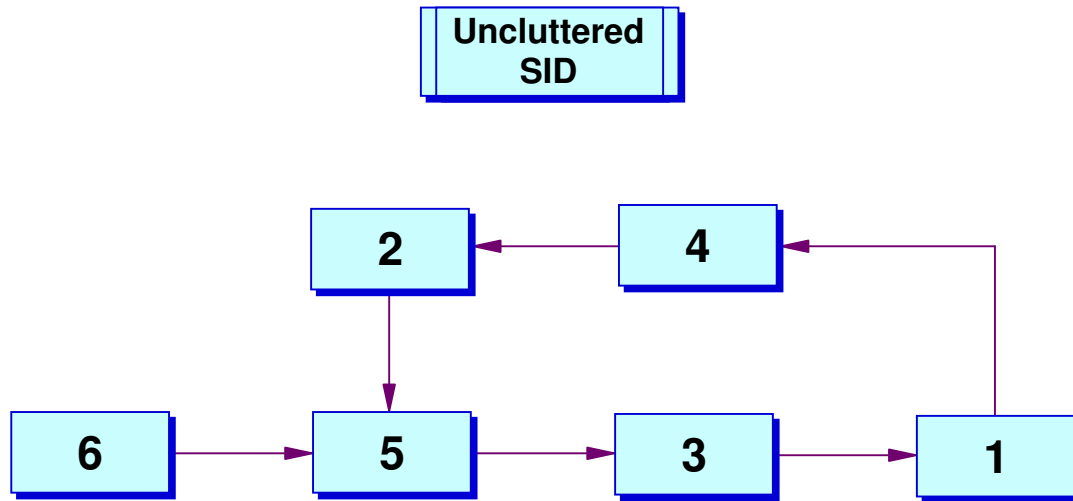


Figure 10. Clean system influence diagram (SID).





*Figure 11.* Clean systems influence diagram (SID), with redundant links eliminated.  
IQA Individual Interviews

The IQA semistructured interview is “designed to capitalize on the consistency afforded by highly structured interviews and the level of detail offered by open-ended or emergent interviews” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 48). Interview questions are designed and based on the affinities and sub affinities developed by the focus group participants and have the purpose of adding richness and depth to the description of the meaning of affinities that is not possible with a focus group alone (Northcutt & McCoy). With the purpose of exploring each affinity thoroughly and consistently, the interview protocol will follow a prescribed order related to the affinities, though follow-up and probing questioning may vary from interview to interview. The IQA interviews serve to enhance the data that more accurately represent the respondent’s personal mindmap, helps the researcher code the impact and influences of these affinities in order to create a SID, and provides group data that better represent the group’s collective SID. Interview Protocol

The interview protocol consists of two parts: (a) the open-end axial interview designed to provide rich description of affinities and (b) the structured theoretical interview designed to identify relationships between the affinities.

*Axial interview.* The axial interview segment is derived from the affinity write-up. After providing the interviewer with the group results, the interviewee is asked to respond to the affinity names by responding to the following questions: “What does the affinity mean to you?” and “Tell me about your experiences with the affinity.”

*Theoretical interview.* The theoretical interview is presented through an ART. As such, the ART serves as the basis for the theoretical interview where, after receiving the table with all possible relationships between the affinities, the interviewees are asked to give their view as to whether they believe there is a relationship between each affinity, identify the relationship, and provide explanation. The researcher will probe the interviewees for experiences that support their view on the affinity relationship.

### *Interview Analysis*

The analysis of the IQA interview consists of the following three basic questions on each of the affinities developed by the group:

1. What does this mean to you?
2. What led to this?
3. What are the results?

The transcript of the interview is coded and analyzed similar to that of the focus group responses, both axially and theoretically.

*Individual interview axial code table (ACT).* Key words and phrases that describe or illustrate an affinity are noted by the researcher and placed into the axial code table (ACT). Specific quotes and phrases from each interview related to a particular affinity are inserted into the ACT. Each quote for any given affinity is represented by another row in the ACT. See Table 11.

Table 11

*Sample Individual Interview Axial Code Table (ACT)*

Sample individual interview ACT			
Affinity	Transcript line	Axial quotation	Researcher notes
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

*Individual interview theoretical code affinity relationship table (TCT).* The theoretical code affinity relationship table (TCT) is the “primary documentation from all utterances that illustrate the manner in which the affinities are related for each respondent” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 49). Theoretical codes, or data that support a relationship between two or more affinities, are identified and documented by the researcher. The direction of the relationship is identified by the use of the arrows, as with the focus group data. The TCT documents both the direction of the relationship and the example or line of reasoning shared by the respondent. The transcript of the interview is reviewed for any additional quotations that support each

of the affinities. All relevant data are recorded into the TCT. Table 12 shows an example of a TCT.

Table 12  
*Sample Individual Interview Theoretical Code Table (TCT)*

Sample individual interview TCT			
Affinity pair relationship	Line number	Theoretical quotation	Researcher notes
1 ← 2			
1 ← 3			
1 ← 4			

*IQA combined interviews.* Once a combined SID has been created from composite interviewee data, axial data are transferred from each ACT to a *combined interview ACT*. A combined interview ACT is a database for the entire set of respondents that includes all axial codes from all affinities and that identifies transcript lines that support or link to an affinity. An example of a combined interview ACT is shown in Table 13.

Table 13  
*Sample Combined Interview Axial Code Table (ACT)*

Sample combined interview ACT			
Affinity	Transcript line	Axial quotation	Researcher notes
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

*Theoretical coding.* A combined interview TCT is produced by combining the theoretical data collected from all respondents. The table lists both directions for relationships, since individual respondents may disagree on the direction of the relationship. See Table 14 for a sample.

Table 14  
*Sample Combined Interview Theoretical Code Table (TCT)*

Sample combined interview TCT			
Affinity relationship	Transcript & line #	Theoretical quotation	Researcher notes
1 → 2			
1 ← 2			
1 → 3			
1 ← 3			

*Theoretical code frequency table.* Similar to an ART, the *combined interview theoretical code frequency table* (see Table 15) tallies the frequency for each affinity relationship. Using the individual interview TCT for each respondent, the researcher simply records the frequency. The frequency of relationships determines the direction.

Table 15

*Sample Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table*

Sample combined interview theoretical code frequency table				
Affinity pair relationship	Frequency		Affinity pair relationship	Frequency
1 → 2	3		1 → 5	1
1 ← 2	0		1 ← 5	1
1 → 3	1		1 → 6	2
1 ← 3	0		1 ← 6	1
1 → 4	0		2 → 3	3
1 ← 4	18		2 ← 3	17

*Composite SID.* Similar to the procedure utilized in constructing a SID with the focus group data, an IRD and SID are created for each interview respondent. A composite SID is then created from the data from the interviews. A combined interview theoretical code frequency table is constructed according to the counts of each theoretical code.

*Pareto protocol.* IQA supplies a protocol (Pareto protocol with MinMax criterion) to construct a composite SID from the data retrieved from the combined individual interview SIDs. The Pareto protocol is a statistical method for representing the consensus, or the “preponderance,” of the group’s analysis of relationships. Named after Wilfredo Pareto, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century economist, the Pareto Principle became prevalent among management and system theories on the subject of quality management, economics, and productivity.

The Pareto Principle states the following: Something like 20% of the variables in a system will account for 80% of the total variation in outcomes (such as

productivity or profit), or simply stated, “a minority of the relationships in any system will account for the majority of the variation within the system” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 157). Other incarnations of the Pareto Principle have materialized:

1. Addressing the most troublesome 20% of a problem will solve 80% of it.
2. In any organization, 20% of the personnel will cause 80% of the headaches.
3. Eighty percent of all work that is completed is really the result of 20% effort.
4. Twenty percent of all potential solutions will solve 80% of the problem.

IQA employs the Pareto Principle to achieve consensus and analytically create a statistical group composite, known as the *Pareto cumulative frequency chart*.

Frequency of each relationship is determined by tallying all of the relationships from the individual ARTs completed by each member of the focus group. The data are recorded on a spreadsheet, like Table 16 below for the six-affinity example discussed previously. The frequency total is 185, which is to say that 185 votes were recorded, for the 30 possible affinity pair relationships (30 permutations of 6 things taken pairwise). Note in Table 16 that some affinity pair relationships received no votes, while other relationships attracted a split vote.

Table 16  
*Sample Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table*

Sample combined interview theoretical code frequency table			
Affinity pair relationship	Frequency	Affinity pair relationship	Frequency
1 → 2	1	2 → 6	3
1 ← 2	18	2 ← 6	0
1 → 3	3	3 → 4	1
1 ← 3	15	3 ← 4	0
1 → 4	3	3 → 5	0
1 ← 4	1	3 ← 5	18
1 → 5	1	3 → 6	1
1 ← 5	11	3 ← 6	1
1 → 6	1	4 → 5	2
1 ← 6	12	4 ← 5	1
2 → 3	20	4 → 6	3
2 ← 3	0	4 ← 6	17
2 → 4	3	5 → 6	2
2 ← 4	16	5 ← 6	15
2 → 5	13		
2 ← 5	3		
		<b>Total frequency</b>	<b>185</b>

*Constructing a Pareto chart.* Using the data obtained in the Pareto cumulative frequency chart, namely the total numbers of “votes” calculated for each relationship, the data are then sorted in descending order. Cumulative frequency and percentages are calculated for each relationship in terms of both total number of relationships (30 in Table 16) and the total number of votes (185 in Table 16). According to Northcutt and McCoy (2004), the rationale for this procedure is two-fold:



1. The procedure determines the optimal number of relationships to comprise the composite system. “Optimal” is used in the sense that the researcher’s objective is to use the fewest number of relationships (for parsimony’s sake) that represent the greatest amount of variation (for the sake of comprehensiveness and richness). Relationships that attract a very low percentage of votes are generally excluded from the group composite.

2. The procedure helps resolve ambiguous relationships, which are relationships that attract votes in either direction.

The *Pareto chart* below contains the same frequencies in the Pareto cumulative frequency chart, but items have been sorted in descending order of frequency. Four columns have been added as follows:

1. Entries in the Cumulative Frequency column contain the running total or cumulative frequency. Each entry is the frequency of votes cast for an affinity pair added to the previous total.

2. Cumulative Percent (Relation) is a cumulative percent based upon the number of total possible relationships, in this case 30; in other words, each relationship represents  $1/30$  or approximately 3.3% of the total possible number. This cumulative percentage is one of two factors in the power index.

3. Cumulative Percent (Frequency) is a cumulative percent based upon the number of votes cast (185). Each entry is the percent of votes cast for an affinity pair added to the previous total.

4. Power is an index of the degree of optimization of the system and is simply the difference between Cumulative Percent (Frequency) and Cumulative Percent (Relation). See Table 17.

Table 17

*Affinities in Descending Order of Frequency With Pareto and Power Analysis*

<b>Affinities in descending order of frequency with Pareto and power analysis</b>					
<b>Affinity pair relationship</b>	<b>Frequency sorted (descending)</b>	<b>Cumulative frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative percent (relation)</b>	<b>Cumulative percent (frequency)</b>	<b>Power</b>
1. 2 → 3	20	20	3.3	10.8	7.5
2. 1 ← 2	18	38	6.7	20.5	13.9
3. 3 ← 5	18	56	10.0	30.3	20.3
4. 4 ← 6	17	73	13.3	39.5	26.1
5. 2 ← 4	16	89	16.7	48.1	31.4
6. 1 ← 3	15	104	20.0	56.2	36.2
7. 5 ← 6	15	119	23.3	64.3	41.0
8. 2 → 5	13	132	26.7	71.4	44.7
9. 1 ← 6	12	144	30.0	77.8	47.8
10. 1 ← 5	11	155	33.3	83.8	50.5
11. 1 → 3	3	158	36.7	85.4	48.7
12. 1 → 4	3	161	40.0	87.0	47.0
13. 2 → 4	3	164	43.3	88.6	45.3
14. 2 → 6	3	167	46.7	90.3	43.6
15. 4 → 6	3	170	50.0	91.9	41.9
16. 2 ← 5	3	173	53.3	93.5	40.2
17. 5 → 6	2	175	56.7	94.6	37.9
18. 4 → 5	2	177	60.0	95.7	35.7
19. 1 → 2	1	178	63.3	96.2	32.9
20. 1 ← 4	1	179	66.7	96.8	30.1
21. 1 → 5	1	180	70.0	97.3	27.3
22. 3 → 4	1	181	73.3	97.8	24.5
23. 3 → 6	1	182	76.7	98.4	21.7
24. 3 ← 6	1	183	80.0	98.9	18.9
25. 4 ← 5	1	184	83.3	99.5	16.1

Affinities in descending order of frequency with Pareto and power analysis					
Affinity pair relationship	Frequency sorted (descending)	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent (relation)	Cumulative percent (frequency)	Power
26. 1 → 6	1	185	86.7	100.0	13.3
27. 2 ← 3	0	185	90.0	100.0	10.0
28. 2 ← 6	0	185	93.3	100.0	6.7
29. 3 ← 4	0	185	96.7	100.0	3.3
30. 3 → 5	0	185	100.0	100.0	0.0
<b>Total Frequency</b>	<b>185</b>				

*The MinMax criterion.* The last two columns of the Pareto table (Table 17) are the keys to deciding which relationships should be included in the group IRD. The relationships are displayed in decreasing order of frequency so that the cut-off point, with regard to how to decide which relationships to exclude from the group IRD, can become evident. The relationships numbered 27–30 in Table 17 should be excluded, since they attracted no votes at all. The question, however, becomes how a cut-off point should be determined for affinities that attract relatively few votes. The decision involves optimizing a tradeoff between two criteria: the composite (a) should account for maximum variation in the system (cumulative percent based upon frequency), while (b) minimizing the number of relationships in the interest of parsimony (cumulative percent based upon relations).

*Accounting for maximum variance.* In accordance with Pareto's concept, relatively few of the possible 30 relationships account for most of the variance; for instance, the first 6 relationships (20% of the total) account for well over half (56%) of the variation in the system, and the first 10 (33% of the total) account for 84% of

the total variation. The maximum variance frequency graph (Figure 12) illustrates the variance accounted for by each succeeding relationship.

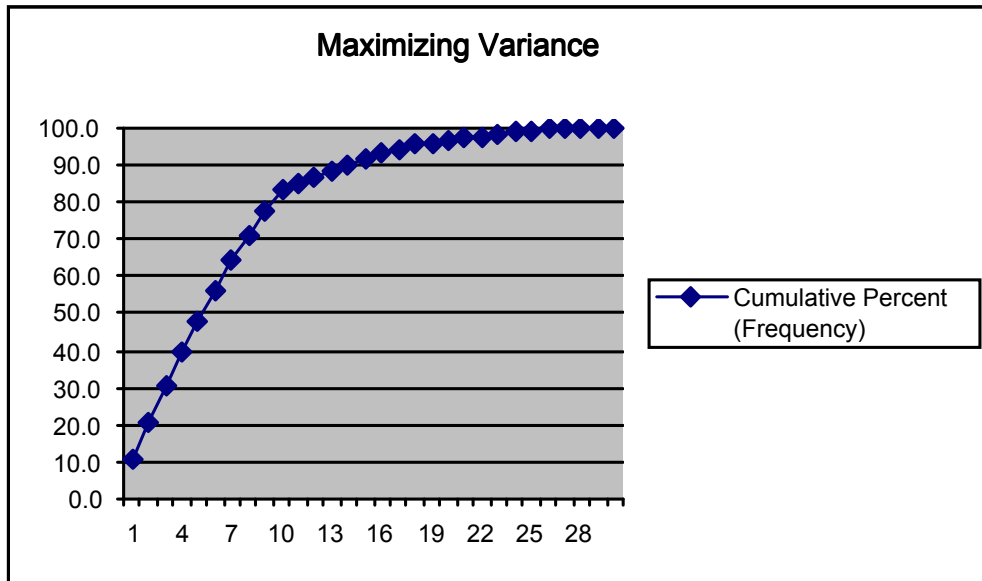


Figure 12. Maximum variance frequency chart.

The power analysis representation in Figure 13 displays the minimization of the number of affinity relationships in the system. Power reaches a maximum at 10 relationships, which accounts for 84% of the variation in this system; therefore, 10 relationships would be a defensible choice for inclusion in the group IRD, since it is an optimal number in the sense of the MinMax criterion.

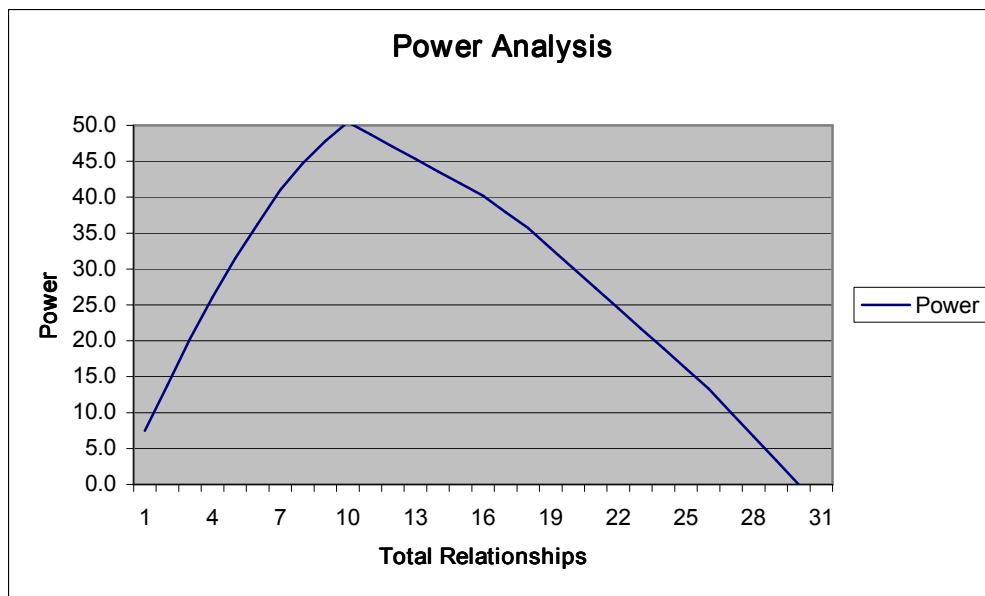


Figure 13. Power analysis minimizing the number of affinity relationships.

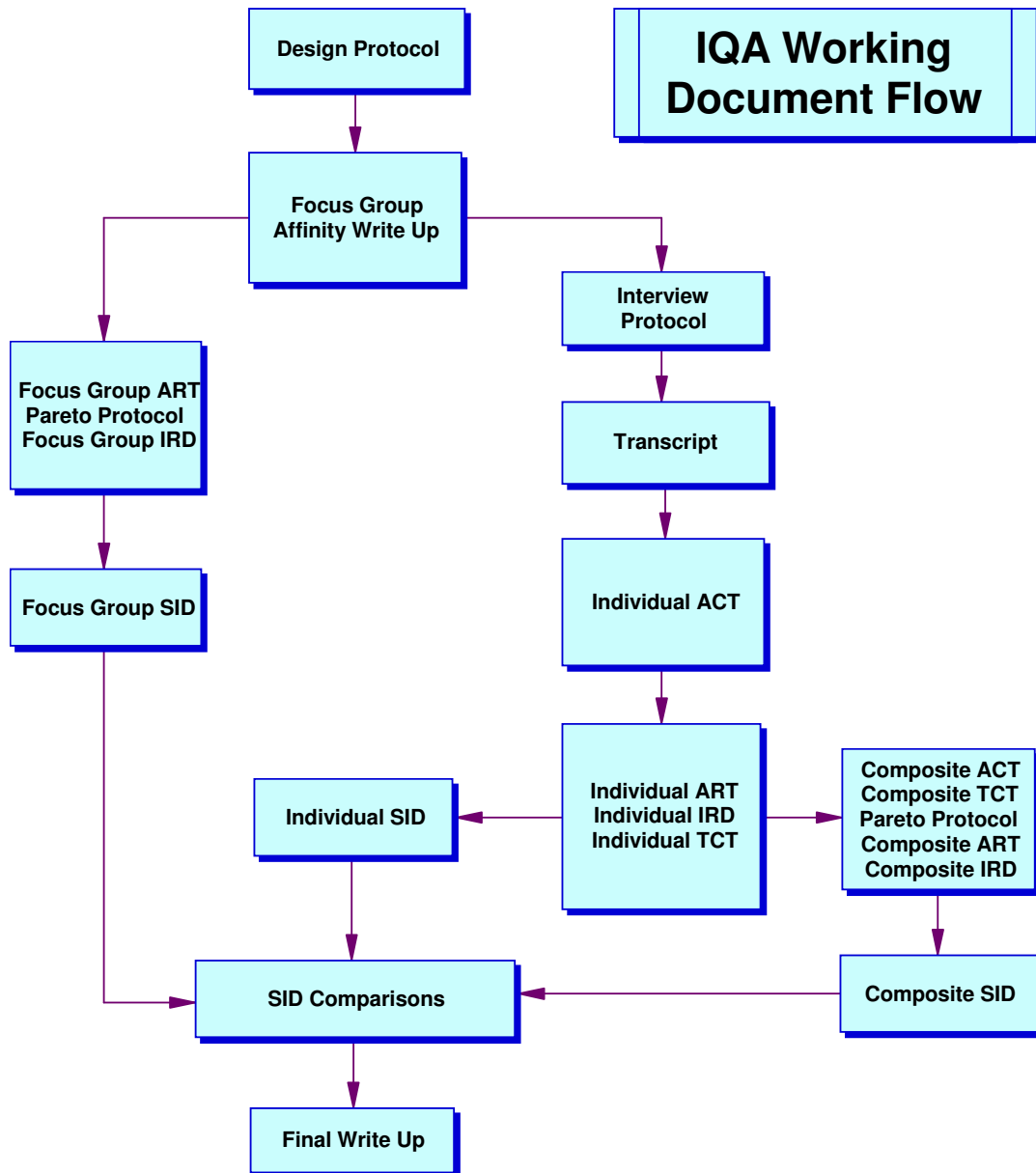
### *IQA Analysis*

The IQA results illustrate a picture of a system or systems. The IQA report will accomplish three goals:

1. It names and describes the elements of the system.
2. It explains relationships among elements of a system (system dynamics).
3. It compares systems.

In sum, IQA methodology identifies and describes the elements, or affinities, of a system; explains the relationships among the affinities utilizing quotations from the participants; and draws comparisons between the mindmaps, either between individuals or among constituencies. As a result, “readers are given a ‘tour’ through the system in which the relative influence of each affinity on others is portrayed in a systemic context...and the words of the participants are used to illustrate the behavior

of the systemic links” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 50). The diagram in Figure 14 visually summarizes the IQA document flow.



*Figure 14.* Interactive qualitative analysis (IQA) working document flow. ACT = axial code table; ART = affinity relationship table; IRD = interrelationship diagram; SID = system influence diagram; TCT = theoretical code affinity relationship table.

## **City of Eagle Pass**

Embedded in the South Texas County of Maverick is the City of Eagle Pass. Moreover, Eagle Pass is located on the Texas Mexico Border approximately 145 miles Southwest of San Antonio, Texas. The Rio Grande River serves as a border between the City of Eagle Pass, Texas, United States and the City of Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico. According to the Census 2000 Demographic Profile report compiled and published by the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), the City of Eagle Pass had a population of 22,413 total, with 46.9 % being male and 53.1% being female residents. This report further indicates the following statistics for the City of Eagle Pass in the year 2000:

- 94.9% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race – the U.S. was 12.5%
- 58.6% of the Total Housing Units were owner-occupied – the U.S. was 66.2%
- 41.4% of the Total Housing Units were renter-occupied – the U.S. was 33.8%
- 9% of the Total Housing Units were vacant – the U.S. was 9%
- The median value of Single-family owner-occupied homes was \$62,500 dollars – the U.S. was \$119,600 dollars
- Families below the poverty level was 26% - the U.S. was 9.2%
- Individuals below the poverty level was 29% - the U.S. was 12.4%
- Foreign born individuals was 35.7% - the U.S. was 11.1%
- Individuals that speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over) was 91.4% - the U.S. was 17.9%

## **E.P.I.S.D. 2005-06**

The E.P.I.S.D. serves primarily, residents of the City of Eagle Pass and residents within the County of Maverick. The district is comprised of 23 schools total (E.P.I.S.D., 2007). There are 18 elementary campuses, 2 middle school campuses, 2

high school campuses, and 1 alternative education campus. According to the 2005-06 AEIS Report (Texas Education Agency, 2007), EPISD served a total of 13,740 students. Furthermore, this report also details the following statistics for the EPISD.

- EPISD had a 2006 Accountability Rating of Academically Acceptable
- Student Body
  - 97.6% of students within EPISD were categorized as Hispanic – the State of Texas was 45.3%
  - 87.7% of students within EPISD were categorized as Economically Disadvantaged– the State of Texas was 55.6%
  - 37.9% of students within EPISD were categorized as Limited English Proficient– the State of Texas was 15.8%
  - 71% of students within EPISD were categorized as At-Risk– the State of Texas was 48.7%
  - 34.9% of EPISD students were enrolled in a Bilingual/ESL Education program; Texas had 14.6%
  - 25.5% of EPISD students were enrolled in a Career & Technology Education program; Texas had 20.3%
  - 7.7% of EPISD students were enrolled in a Gifted & Talented program; Texas had 7.6%
  - 8.2% of EPISD students were enrolled in the Special Education program; Texas had 11.1%
- Class size average at the secondary level was:
  - English/Language Arts – EPISD: 19.9 students; Texas: 20.3 students
  - Foreign Languages – EPISD: 20.3 students; Texas: 21.3 students
  - Mathematics – EPISD: 22 students; Texas: 20.3 students
  - Science – EPISD: 22.3 students; Texas: 21.5 students
  - Social Studies – EPISD 22.1 students; Texas: 22.5 students
- Total staff for EPISD was 1,943.8 people (100%)
  - 1,022.9 people or 52.6% of total staff being Professional Staff; Texas was 62.5%
    - EPISD Teachers comprised of 43.2% of total staff (840 people); Texas was 50.7%
    - EPISD Professional Support comprised of 7.3% of total staff (142 people); Texas was 8%
    - EPISD Campus Administration comprised of 1.7% of total staff (32.9 people); Texas was 2.8%
    - EPISD Central Administration comprised of 0.4% of total staff (8 people); Texas was 1%



- EPISD Educational Aides comprised of 13.7% of total staff (265.7 people); Texas was 10.2%
- EPISD Auxiliary Staff comprised of 33.7% of total staff (655.3 people); Texas was 27.3%
- Teaching Staff:
  - Ethnicity
    - EPISD had 90.5% of teachers being Hispanic; Texas had 20.1%
    - EPISD had 8.7% of teachers being White; Texas had 69.4%
    - EPISD had 7% of teachers being Asian/Pacific Islander; Texas had 1.1%
  - Gender
    - EPISD had 33.3% of teachers being male; Texas had 22.9%
    - EPISD had 66.7% of teachers being female ; Texas had 77.1%
  - Highest Degree Held
    - EPISD had .7% of teachers having No Degree; Texas had 1%
    - EPISD had 81.9% of teachers having a Bachelors Degree; Texas had 77.3%
    - EPISD had 17% of teachers having a Masters Degree; Texas had 21.2%
    - EPISD had 0.4% of teachers having a Doctors Degree; Texas had 0.5%
  - Years of Experience
    - EPISD had 8% categorized as Beginning Teachers; Texas had 7.5%
    - EPISD had 29.2% categorized as having 1-5 years of experience; Texas had 29%
    - EPISD had 20.7% categorized as having 6-10 years of experience; Texas had 19.4%
    - EPISD had 20% categorized as having 11-20 years of experience; Texas had 24.2%
    - EPISD had 22.1% categorized as having over 20 years of experience; Texas had 19.9%
    - Teachers average years of experience with EPISD was 10.4 years; Texas was 7.6 years
  - Salary
    - EPISD average teacher salary was \$43,758 dollars; Texas was \$41,744 dollars
  - Others

- EPISD teacher turnover rate was 9%; Texas was 14.6%
- 7.3% of EPISD teachers serve under the Bilingual/ESL Education program; Texas had 8.8%

### *Eagle Pass High School*

During the 2005-2006 academic school year, there were two high schools total within EPISD. These two high schools served 3,672 students assigned at the High School Level. The campuses were Eagle Pass High School (EPHS) and Eagle Pass High School – CC Winn (CC Winn). EPHS served only students who were classified as being in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade. According to the 2005-06 AEIS Report (Texas Education Agency, 2007), EPHS served a total of 1,922 students. Furthermore, this report also details the following statistics for the EPHS campus:

- EPHS had a 2006 Accountability Rating of Academically Acceptable
- Student Body
  - 97.6% of students within EPHS were categorized as Hispanic – the State of Texas was 45.3%
  - 90.5% of students within EPHS were categorized as Economically Disadvantaged– the State of Texas was 55.6%
  - 15% of students within EPHS were categorized as Limited English Proficient– the State of Texas was 15.8%
  - 63.8% of students within EPHS were categorized as At-Risk– the State of Texas was 48.7%
  - 19.1% of EPHS students were classified under Mobility (2004-05); Texas had 21.1%
  - 12.5% of EPHS students were enrolled in a Bilingual/ESL Education program; Texas had 14.6%
  - 74.1% of EPHS students were enrolled in a Career & Technology Education program; Texas had 20.3%
  - 5.2% of EPHS students were enrolled in a Gifted & Talented program; Texas had 7.6%
  - 8.7% of EPHS students were enrolled in the Special Education program; Texas had 11.1%
- Class size average at the secondary level was:
  - English/Language Arts – EPHS: 19.1 students; Texas: 20.3 students

- Foreign Languages – EPHS: 20.2 students; Texas: 21.3 students
- Mathematics – EPHS: 22.9 students; Texas: 20.3 students
- Science – EPHS: 22.6 students; Texas: 21.5 students
- Social Studies – EPHS: 23.8 students; Texas: 22.5 students
- Total staff for EPHS was 163.5 people (100%)
  - 141 people or 86.2% of total EPHS staff was Professional Staff; Texas was 62.5%
    - EPHS Teachers comprised of 73.1% of total staff (119.6 people); Texas was 50.7%
    - EPHS Professional Support comprised of 10% of total staff (16.4 people); Texas was 8%
    - EPHS Campus Administration comprised of 3.1% of total staff (5 people); Texas was 2.8%
  - EPHS Educational Aides comprised of 13.8% of total staff (22.5 people); Texas was 10.2%
- Teaching Staff:
  - Ethnicity
    - EPHS had 83.1% of teachers being Hispanic; Texas had 20.1%
    - EPHS had 13.6% of teachers being White; Texas had 69.4%
    - EPHS had 3.3% of teachers being Asian/Pacific Islander; Texas had 1.1%
  - Gender
    - EPHS had 54.7% of teachers being male; Texas had 22.9%
    - EPHS had 45.3% of teachers being female; Texas had 77.1%
  - Years of Experience
    - EPHS had 11.8% categorized as Beginning Teachers; Texas had 7.5%
    - EPHS had 28% categorized as having 1-5 years of experience; Texas had 29%
    - EPHS had 28% categorized as having 6-10 years of experience; Texas had 19.4%
    - EPHS had 15.4% categorized as having 11-20 years of experience; Texas had 24.2%
    - EPHS had 16.8% categorized as having over 20 years of experience; Texas had 19.9%
    - Teachers average years of experience with EPISD was 8.6 years; Texas was 7.6 years
  - Salary

- EPHS average teacher salary was \$43,177 dollars; Texas was \$41,744 dollars; Texas was \$41,744 dollars
- Others
  - 12.5% of EPHS teachers serve under the Bilingual/ESL Education program; Texas had 8.8%

#### *Eagle Pass High School – CC WINN*

The CC WINN campus served only students who were classified as being in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade. According to the 2005-06 AEIS Report (Texas Education Agency, 2007), CC WINN served a total of 1,583 students. Furthermore, this report also details the following statistics for the CC WINN campus:

- CC WINN had a 2006 Accountability Rating of Recognized
- Student Body
  - 97.8% of students within CC WINN were categorized as Hispanic – the State of Texas was 45.3%
  - 85% of students within CC WINN were categorized as Economically Disadvantaged– the State of Texas was 55.6%
  - 12% of students within CC WINN were categorized as Limited English Proficient– the State of Texas was 15.8%
  - 74.9% of students within CC WINN were categorized as At-Risk– the State of Texas was 48.7%
  - 14.9% of CC WINN students were classified under Mobility (2004-05); Texas had 21.1%
  - 10.7% of CC WINN students were enrolled in a Bilingual/ESL Education program; Texas had 14.6%
  - 89.4% of CC WINN students were enrolled in a Career & Technology Education program; Texas had 20.3%
  - 5.9% of CC WINN students were enrolled in a Gifted & Talented program; Texas had 7.6%
  - 9.5% of CC WINN students were enrolled in the Special Education program; Texas had 11.1%
- Class size average at the secondary level was:
  - English/Language Arts – CC WINN: 20.6 students; Texas: 20.3 students
  - Foreign Languages – CC WINN: 20.5 students; Texas: 21.3 students
  - Mathematics – CC WINN: 19.7 students; Texas: 20.3 students
  - Science – CC WINN: 23.4 students; Texas: 21.5 students

- Social Studies – CC WINN: 20.8 students; Texas: 22.5 students
- Total staff for CC WINN was 126.1 people (100%)
  - 110.5 people or 87.6% of total CC WINN staff was Professional Staff; Texas was 62.5%
    - CC WINN Teachers comprised of 78.6% of total staff (99.1 people); Texas was 50.7%
    - CC WINN Professional Support comprised of 6.7% of total staff (8.5 people); Texas was 8%
    - CC WINN Campus Administration comprised of 2.3% of total staff (2.9 people); Texas was 2.8%
  - CC WINN Educational Aides comprised of 12.4% of total staff (15.7 people); Texas was 10.2%
- Teaching Staff:
  - Ethnicity
    - CC WINN had 82% of teachers being Hispanic; Texas had 20.1%
    - CC WINN had 16.0% of teachers being White; Texas had 69.4%
    - CC WINN had 2% of teachers being Asian/Pacific Islander; Texas had 1.1%
  - Gender
    - CC WINN had 52.7% of teachers being male; Texas had 22.9%
    - CC WINN had 47.3% of teachers being female; Texas had 77.1%
  - Years of Experience
    - CC WINN had 8.9% categorized as Beginning Teachers; Texas had 7.5%
    - CC WINN had 24.8% categorized as having 1-5 years of experience; Texas had 29%
    - CC WINN had 17.8% categorized as having 6-10 years of experience; Texas had 19.4%
    - CC WINN had 22.6% categorized as having 11-20 years of experience; Texas had 24.2%
    - CC WINN had 25.9% categorized as having over 20 years of experience; Texas had 19.9%
    - Teachers average years of experience with EPISD was 11.7 years; Texas was 7.6 years
  - Salary
    - CC WINN average teacher salary was \$43,177 dollars; Texas was \$46,927 dollars; Texas was \$41,744 dollars

- Others
  - 12.5% of CC WINN teachers serve under the Bilingual/ESL Education program; Texas had 8.8%

### **Participants**

This EPISD case study required the researcher to obtain approval from the EPISD superintendent, Mr. Jesus Sanchez, to conduct the research and have access to the participants in the EPISD district. Through several formal and informal visits with Mr. Sanchez, the purpose, design, and process of the study were described and permission was granted (see Appendix A for approval letter). The research required the participation of 20–25 high school teachers, divided equally among those who have high-performing ELLs and those who have low-performing ELLs, as assessed by superintendent or the superintendent’s designee. Additionally, the study required the participants to work at Eagle Pass High School (EPHS, Grades 9–10) or Eagle Pass High School–CC Winn (EPHS-CC Winn, Grades 11–12). Two separate focus groups were conducted. One focus group was with teachers with high-performing ELLs, and the other was with teachers with low-performing ELLs. During each focus group, both high schools had the same amount of teacher representation.

The participants for this study were identified through purposive sampling. Ritchie et al. (2003) defined purposive sampling: “The sample units were chosen because they had a particular feature or characteristics which enabled detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wished to study” (p. 78). The sample was small in scale, purposively selected on the

basis of salient criteria and “in some sense *representative* of a population to which it is desired to generalize” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 200).

The superintendent or superintendent’s designee selected and identified participants of both focus groups. The superintendent or superintendent’s designee selected 10–12 individuals (half from EPHS and half from EPHS-CC Winn) according to the following criteria: (a) high school teacher, (b) 3 years of experience working with the district and ELL student population, (c) bilingual, and (d) successful with ELL students. Additionally, the superintendent or superintendent’s designee selected 10–12 individuals (half from EPHS and half from EPHS-CC Winn) according to the following criteria: (a) high school teacher, (b) 3 years of experience working with the district and ELL student population, (c) bilingual, and (d) not successful with ELL students.

### **Procedures**

The participants were contacted by letter via email or in hard copy form. The letter stated the purpose of the study, requested that the teacher accept being part of the study, and assured the participants of their confidentiality. Moreover, the letter explained that participation in this study would not be linked to their employment status by any means. Furthermore, steps were taken to protect the identity of the participants. For example, responses from the focus groups or individual interviews would only be used for purposes of the study and would only be revealed by number. Respondents would remain anonymous. The researcher sought IRB approval upon

completion of a successful dissertation proposal defense. The IRB application also stated the confidentiality procedures.

There were two focus groups. Each group met only once as a group for approximately 6–7 hours, including lunch and breaks. During each focus group, the participants identified the affinities to be used during the study. The participants also indicated relationships between affinities. The focus groups were recorded using audiovisual technology. The researcher interviewed each participant individually only once. Each interview took approximately 45–60 minutes. During the individual interview, each participant was asked for their thoughts on each of the affinities and their relationship to each other. The individual interviews were recorded with an audio recorder and transcribed by an independent transcriber.

### **Limitations**

Although other South Texas rural school districts that lie on or near the Texas–Mexico border may resemble the district in this study, the findings of this research is specific to EPISD in Eagle Pass, Texas. Consequently, the findings of the research in this study may not be transferable to other contexts.

The participants were asked to voluntarily take part in this study through purposive sampling. The sample size of the focus groups was 20–24 high school teachers working within EPISD. The superintendent or superintendent's designee selected the individuals according to the following criteria: (a) high school teacher, (b) 3 years of experience working with the district and ELL student population, and



(c) bilingual. With that in mind, limitations included the small sample size and limited experiences and inherent bias among the participants.

Because of the required large group consensus among the members of the focus groups, decisions made may be a result of “groupthink” (Johns, 1996). The use of IQA may minimize the groupthink, since it employs the silent nominal group technique, which consists of brainstorming tools that include individual participation as well as group participation.

### **Standards for Qualitative Research**

How can one establish confidence in the “truth” of the findings of an inquiry for the respondents with which and the context in which the inquiry was carried out? How can one determine the degree to which the finding of an inquiry may have applicability in other contexts or with other respondents? How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be consistently repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) respondents in the same (or similar) context? How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry stem from the characteristics of the respondents and the context and not from the biases, motivations, interests, and perspectives of the inquirer? (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 218)

Lincoln and Guba maintained that the trustworthiness of a study can be measured by invoking the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

#### *Credibility*

Cook and Campbell (as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985) defined *credibility* (also termed *internal validity*) as the “approximate validity [the best approximation of the truth or falsity of a statement] with which we infer that a relationship between two variables is causal or that the absence of a relationship implies the absence of a cause” (p. 290). To ensure credibility of the data collected in this study, multiple

sources of data were accessed. Peer debriefing, member checking, persistent observation, and methods of triangulation were employed. Specifically, focus group data and individual interview data were utilized to triangulate findings.

### *Transferability*

Transferability, also known as external validity, refers to the generalization or application of the findings to other similar settings. Generalization has been described to include two contexts: empirical and theoretical (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The empirical context “concerns the application of findings from qualitative research studies to populations or settings beyond the particular sample of the study” (Ritchie & Lewis, p. 264). The theoretical, or theory-building, context involves the generation of theoretical concepts or propositions that are drawn from constructs developed in a single study, which are then utilized in developing wider theory and may be deemed to be of wider application. Seeing that transferability is not always achievable in qualitative studies, it becomes the responsibility of the researcher to make the transfer applicable between studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher maintains that the development process involving the IQA methodology and grounded theory approach allows for the transferability for districts or schools wishing to conduct needs assessments that then be can utilized for decision making in strategic planning and implementation of change.

### *Dependability and Confirmability*

To ensure dependability and confirmability in a qualitative study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested the techniques of audit inquiry and audit trail. The Halpern audit trail notational system as suggested by Lincoln and Guba consists of six categories: (a) raw data, including electronically recorded materials, written field notes, documents and records, and survey results; (b) data reduction and analysis products, including field notes, unitized data (3 x 5 cards), and theoretical notes; (c) data reconstruction and synthesis products, including structure of categories (themes and relationships), findings and conclusions (interpretations and inferences), and a final report; (d) process notes, including methodological notes (procedures, designs, strategies), trustworthiness and audit trail notes; (e) materials related to intentions and dispositions, including personal notes (reflexive notes and motivations), and expectations (predictions and intentions); and (f) instrument development information, including pilot forms, preliminary schedules, observation formats, and surveys.

In accordance with the Halpern audit trail notational system (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) described above, all relevant data pertaining to the case study was systematically documented and stored, including the 3 x 5 index cards, original coding and construction of data tables, database files, original field notes, audio recordings, and transcripts.

### *Summary*

This chapter provided a detailed explanation of the IQA methodology used in the data collection methods and analysis procedures in this study. The IQA methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of the system by investigating the two components of systems: (a) the elements and (b) the relationship among the elements. The limitations and standards for qualitative research also were presented. In chapter 4, the researcher describes the results of the analysis.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE VOICES OF THE ORANGE AND WHITE FOCUS GROUPS**

#### **Group Reality: System Relationships**

##### *Statement of the Problem*

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that influence the academic achievement of ELLs at the high school level, in the form of the mind map, mental picture, or point of view individuals have of a process for accomplishing a given task. One mind map consisted of the perceptions of high school teachers who produce high-performing ELLs, as it identified the components of the education of ELLs and how they are linked. The other mind map consisted of the perception of high school teachers who produce low-performing ELLs, as it identified the components of the education of ELLs and how they are linked. Additionally, the study was designed to compare and contrast relationships among the mind maps and how they influence the academic achievement of ELLs. This study was conducted through a qualitative research approach that employed an IQA methodology that actively engaged constituents in reflective, meaningful discourse surrounding a phenomenon of interests. The research resulted in rich, detailed, intensive, and comprehensive data that can be utilized for strategic planning and for implementing change. The IQA process and analysis provided a needs-assessment technique for identifying teaching methods that better serve ELLs.

### *Research Questions*

1. What is the mind map of high school teachers in producing a high-performing ELL?
2. What is the mind map of high school teachers in producing a low-performing ELL?
3. How does the mind map of teachers producing high-performing ELLs compare to the mind map of teachers producing low-performing ELLs?

### *The IQA Methodology*

In this study, the IQA focus group component yielded eight affinities that make up the mind map of high school teachers educating ELLs in EPISD at the high school level. Through exploration, examination, and synthesizing of educators' thinking, including their experiences, emotions, thoughts, perceptions, reactions, and reflections concerning the education of the ELL population, the IQA process captured, in depth and detail, the experiences of the participants, producing quality data and analysis of that data. This effort, which required planning and conducting focus group sessions, featured intense, interactive collaboration among the focus group members, interviewees, and, to some extent, the researcher. The focus group process contributed to the initial identification of affinities with respect to the three primary research questions. These affinities are an integral part of the educators' mental mind map for educating the ELL population. The interview analysis segment of the IQA framework confirmed relational information regarding the direction or influence of each of the factors. The final product was refined through the theoretical

potential of the study utilizing Systems Influence Diagrams, which are presented later in this chapter and further elaborated on in chapter five.

### *Sample Selection Criteria*

The sampling process was purposeful so that a small sample could be studied in an in-depth manner (Patton, 2002). Information-rich studies, such as this one, provide dense descriptions of central importance to the purpose of the research. The criteria used for selection is set forth in the following section.

During the 2005-2006 school year Eagle Pass ISD configured its high school as follows: Eagle Pass High School housed 9<sup>th</sup>- and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students while Eagle Pass High School – CC Winn housed 11<sup>th</sup>- and 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students. After securing permission from the superintendent to conduct the study within Eagle Pass ISD, the superintendent's designee identified 10-12 high school teachers for each focus group. The teachers identified were regarded as either having success with ELLs or not having success with ELLs. Each focus group included educators from all four core curricular content areas and elective classes. These teachers were segregated into two groups, the Orange Group and the White Group. The researcher was unaware of which group was which. Teachers who were successful with ELLs were selected according to the following criteria, (half from EPHS and half from EPHS-CC Winn): (a) high school teacher, (b) 3 years of experience working with the district and ELL student population, (c) bilingual, and (d) successful with ELL students. Likewise, teachers who were unsuccessful with ELLs were selected according to the following criteria, (half from EPHS and half from EPHS-CC Winn): (a) high school teacher, (b)

3 years of experience working with the district and ELL student population, (c) bilingual, and (d) not successful with ELL students. Once the members of the groups were identified, the researcher contacted the teachers via letter, telephone, and in person. The researcher explained the basis of the study and asked if the teacher would volunteer to participate. Not all of the teachers identified chose to participate. Altogether, the focus groups were comprised of 15 high school teachers. The Orange Group consisted of 8 teachers and the White Group consisted of 7 teachers.

Both groups had representation from the various academic disciplines, including the all core courses and some electives. The Orange and White Groups participated in a focus group on separate days. The focus group discussions concentrated on factors that influence the education of ELLs in Eagle Pass ISD and involved all the teachers in their respective groups. The University of Texas at Austin IRB procedure was followed.

### *The IQA Process*

On separate days, the Orange Group and the White Group gathered in a school district boardroom, which was comfortable enough to actively engage all participants in the IQA procedure. At each table the following items were placed: index cards, pencils and pens, markers, and two copies of the IRB Consent Form, including the Statement of Consent form that the participants signed. The participants were informed about the nature of the research and the selection process, told of the interest in their experiences, and assured that this process would identify rich detail regarding common themes in their experiences. The facilitator reassured the groups of



the strict confidentiality of their responses and requested their candid thoughts and convictions concerning their beliefs.

The facilitator initiated the IQA process by engaging the participants in warm-up discussions surrounding the topic of interest, the education of ELLs. The facilitator then defined an ELL to the group as any individual whose first language is any language other than English. Next, the researcher asked each group to think of students in their previous and present classes for students whose first language was not English. The facilitator asked the groups to think of the as many factors as possible that influence that particular student population. This warm-up activity lasted about five minutes and aided the participants in familiarizing themselves with the specified topic and focusing their energy and thoughts.

The following statement was then read to the participants during their respective focus group:

Please take a few moments to think about your achievement results, the gains, the setbacks, the challenges and the barriers in working with the ELL student population. Think about the overall system, the factors in the district that promote, support, and/or impede the performance of the ELL student. Think about the programs, initiatives, people, groups, resources, interactions, perceptions, and intentions that come into play. Use the note cards to brainstorm as many factors as you can. Use one note card per thought/factor.

The guided imagery process continued for 15–20 minutes. The participants were asked to reflect on their experiences to date. Emphasizing that they would be allowed to brainstorm without the penalty of censorship, the group was asked to think of words, phrases, mental pictures, or memories of experiences. The group was asked to take index cards and write one experience, word, phrase, sentence, idea, or memory per card. The facilitator reassured the participants that there were no right or wrong

answers because it was their lived reality. They were asked to write on their cards in silence and produce as many cards as possible. They were assured that whatever they wrote on the card would stay confidential within the group and be used only for the purpose of the research. When everyone in the group appeared to have exhausted their thoughts, the participants were asked to tape them to the wall in no particular order, and to be prepared to share their ideas.

The cards were taped to the wall and the participants read each card. The group was asked if each card made sense. If a card was unclear, the author or another member was asked if he or she wanted to explain the meaning. For the most part, the authors had no hesitation in coming forward to clarify the meaning.

When they were done reading and clarifying the cards, the group was asked to arrange the cards into columns according to theme. If members disagreed with where a card had been moved, they were to feel free to move it to another column. They were asked not to talk about where their cards should go. If a card's meaning and placement appeared ambiguous, it would be cleared up in the next step. This went on for several minutes until the group felt that each card was in place.

The facilitator asked the group to give each column a name. A new note card reflecting the name of that particular column was placed above the column. The note card depicting the name was in a different color to help visually identify the different columns. The facilitator progressed through each column until they all had been named. When several columns were combined under one newly named category, the original columns became subaffinities of the new affinity. Each card was then reexamined to see if it continued to belong in the original column or in another

column. If categories seemed to be overly complex, the group was instructed to see if subcategories were necessary. Each column was then rearranged to reflect the subcategories. Each subcategory was also given a name. Once the cards had been arranged and affinities named, the affinity production exercise was complete.

The purpose of each focus group session was to generate categories of meaning or affinities to be used later in an interview protocol. Some affinities may have represented a pendulum swing of the same category of meaning and would better be represented under one affinity. Furthermore, prior to developing the Individual Interview Protocol, the researcher combined the affinities identified by the two focus groups. Combining the identified affinities provided one Individual Interview Protocol for all participants.

The identified affinities were used during the individual interviews that were conducted at a later date. The individual interviews offered additional explanation of the affinity and the interviewee's perspective on the relationships between all affinities. Specifically, during the axial component of the interview, participants were asked to give an explanation of each affinity regarding its meaning and to share his or her experiences involving the affinity. The theoretical aspect of the interview focused on the completion of the affinity relationships tables (ARTs), whereby all possible relationships between the affinities were provided. Participants were asked to identify the relationship between affinities and provide an explanation or context to their judgments.

All interviews were transcribed word for word by an independent transcriber. Once the transcriptions were complete, the researcher analyzed the text for axial

codes, which are specific examples of discourse that illustrate or allude to an affinity. The researcher then documented the reference for retrieval by recording the affinity number on the line of transcript referring to the affinity, and by documenting the line numbers and affinity numbers in the Individual Interview Axial Code Table (ACT). Quotes relating to a specific affinity were cut and pasted into the third column of the ACT, along with the line(s) of the transcript that were the source of the axial quote. Once all the interviews had been coded, the data were summarized to create a composite of each individual's experience with the phenomenon. Axial data was transferred from each Individual Interview ACT to a Combined Interview ACT. However, the researcher combined the Orange Group's ACTs to form the Combined ACT for the Orange Group. The same was done for the White Group. By combining all interviews into one table per group, the researcher created a database for the entire set of respondents containing all axial codes for all affinities, with each code containing a link or a reference to the transcript and line numbers that produced the code.

Next, the researcher examined all the quotes for each affinity. Multiple quotes were woven together to develop a composite quote. The following section identifies the affinity by group and provides a brief description written by the researcher, followed by a composite description of the affinities based solely on quotes obtained from all the interviews.

### *Individual Interview Protocol*

The following protocol was derived from the combined affinity list of both the Orange and White Groups. A brief definition was used to describe the affinity to avoid influencing the responses given during the interview. A copy of the protocol was provided to each participant being interviewed as a point of reference. The interview protocol consisted of two parts: the open-end axial interview designed to provide rich description of affinities by the respondents and the structured theoretical interview designed to identify relationships between affinities.

### **Interview Protocol (Axial) Orange Group Response**

#### *Transcripts and ACTs*

All interviews were transcribed word for word. Once the transcripts had been prepared, the researcher analyzed the text for *axial codes*, which are specific examples of discourse that illustrate or allude to an affinity. The researcher documented the reference for retrieval by recording the affinity number on the line of transcript that refers to the affinity, and by documenting the line numbers and affinity numbers in the Individual Interview ACT. Quotes relating to a specific affinity were cut and pasted into the third column of the ACT, along with the lines of the transcript that were the source of the axial quote. Once all interviews had been coded, the data from the interviews were summarized to create a composite of the individuals' experience with the phenomenon. Axial data were transferred from each Individual Interview ACT to a Combined Interview ACT. By combining all interviews into one

table, the researcher created a database for the entire set of respondents that contained all axial codes for all affinities. Each code contained a link or a reference to the transcript and line numbers that produced the code.

### *Composite Affinity Descriptions*

Next, the researcher examined all the quotes for each separate affinity. Multiple quotes were woven together to develop a composite quote. The following section is a composite description of the affinities based on quotes obtained from all the interviews.

*Assessment.* Assessment characterizes the exams and tests administered at all levels. It encompasses the gamut from state level standardized exams (TAKS) to teacher informal observations. These assessments are utilized to provide previous educational background and monitor ongoing academic progress. As a school, these results, disaggregated by population and subpopulations on the TAKS test, are public information. In Texas, these results play a large part in a school's and/or school district's rating. The ELL must be able to pass the TAKS within two years of entering the Texas educational system. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Assessment.

**“The TAKS test is only administered in English, and the ELL student must pass it in order to graduate.** We are so focused on the TAKS and the TAKS and the TAKS. The test that of course is always on our minds is the TAKS test. By in large the majority of the testing is geared more towards the TAKS. We are so focused on the TAKS and the TAKS and the TAKS. What is TAKS? TAKS is reality. TAKS is being able to understand. TAKS is being able to fully grasp what they're asking us and answering it completely.

If we teach the kids to think from the nothingness to the whole picture, we're going to make it. Being able to reproduce what they've learned in the classroom, just checking for student understanding based on individual work, not group work. Then I will try to do it in English because that is very important because the TAKS is in English, not in Spanish. Some of them do not have the skills to answer to the best of their abilities. Especially because most of them, their first language has been, especially on the border, Spanish.

Sometimes it's kind of difficult for them to fully grasp the meaning of the questions and to answer correctly. I think they have a difficult time because of the language barrier, because it is written and it's not oral. I think they have trouble with the vocabulary. They're not allowed to translate anything into another language in a state assessment. So I guess, yeah it is damaging, but in a way it helps them to understand it, but in a way it damages them because when they come to the test they are not forced, I mean they're forced to use the English and not their regular language. I have seen a lot of test anxiety, a lot of learner frustration, because of the requirements of the language. It's not these students, as limited English proficient, it's not they don't have the capability to answer the questions or to understand the problems, or to understand the selections, it's that they lack the vocabulary to express their thoughts and I see a lot of them that are very disappointed and they feel that their true intelligence, their true knowledge is not being represented in these exams.

Assessment for newcomers to the ESL classes require a pre and post test, which would be the LAS and it gives us a certain measure of comprehending how the student is able to use language orally, which is very limited. Assessment is necessary on a daily basis by teacher observation, by actual written tests, but at a comfortable level where the students can see success. Not a challenge where it almost seems an impossible task to ask them to learn a language and perform in that language overnight. At the state level, the TAKS is also used and it really challenges the student who has been here for less than a year or maybe two to rise to the occasion of reading at a higher level, which would be above their ability.

Time is not in our favor because within one or two years they will be testing, either the regular testing that the state mandates or the test that we are given here locally in our district. The frustration is that the student sees that test, which is a copy of a previous regular state test and they take more than 30 minutes or maybe an hour to look at it and put it away. Assessments to me with English language learners needs to be in a format that gets the child maybe to look at a picture and express his knowledge of what the item or the topic may be. A lot of words at this time to me are very difficult to deal with and to me the picture or a diagram of some kind that easily relates to the meaning of the topic that you are talking about would certainly be a big asset to the testing process. It is a written, the assessment that I personally

administer is mostly written and is mostly matching and basic understanding of the topic and so I think they really have not that much of a problem, even though it's in English. But if they know Spanish, which most of them know or are familiar with the alphabet, and I know it's not the same in Spanish and English, but they do have...they can come up with deductions or they come out with certain words that might be coded in their own language and it's easier to get a passing grade. I think they're already trained, by the time they get to us in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, most of the kids in here, I dare say 90% of them or maybe even higher, they've been trained for years since the early levels perhaps, even the first grade. So they know all kinds of strategies. They know all kinds of coding. They know how to make deductions, because the test is written and they go by process of elimination on the testing, even though it requires doing some thinking, comprehension of the subject matter, but I think they do have a better chance. I think it seems that right now in the area of history most of the assessment, I am going to say 100% of the assessment, is done writing. So, I think an English learner would be a lot easier to pass an assessment in writing."

*Time Management.* This affinity referred to several topics regarding time. In one sense it referred to the amount of time a student had been in the American educational system. Moreover, it referred to the amount of time between a student initiating their American educational career and the time constraints in which these students are expected to pass the TAKS test. It also referred to the amount of time the student and teacher have in class for instructional purposes. Furthermore, it encompassed the amount of time an ELL may need to develop mastery in specific academic content area or skills. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Time Management.

**"I feel that time is not in our favor.** I have always been told that to learn a language requires 3, 5, and even 6 years for a young person to speak, understand, listen, read and write, but we are limited on time. I guess I need to enforce more that there are resources, like maybe after school. It goes back with time, like they need to put more time into it, because if they don't understand the concept, they are having trouble with reading the language, they need more time for practice.



On the other hand, someone that knows English already can do the work very fast in the classroom. Well, it's just depending on how long they have been here, like what grade level they started off with, or if they've been here, let's say 5 years they would have more experience in reading the language easier and understanding it than if they have been here for 2 years and that's a little more complicated for them.

We know we have these kids and we know we have to do a job with them within a real short time and within two years. The way we are with 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade in one school and 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade in another school, within two years we have to have them ready to take the TAKS test and pass it. Well, the way we are kind of structured here we get a lot of individuals that we're talking about 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade and as these students come in to us they need a lot of English and we have a real short fuse with them. Sometimes, this fuse is so short that just to take the TAKS assessment and get out of high school is just really a real challenge to get that accomplished sometimes. The kid has to be dedicated. He has got to be very well disciplined and be focused to tackle that type of situation. I'm a firm believer if the kids just come to school and they're here in class and they do the work that they're supposed to do, that they'll succeed.

I think the ones that have the biggest problems are the ones who just don't come to school and I guess that's in my opinion where the time management will come in, because there's a lot of kids that don't come to school because they don't put it as a priority. The time that they spend in school isn't enough to help them out. And those are the kids that I feel that you see struggling more and then if you add on the language barrier on to that, well then it's just almost devastating for them, I guess you could say.

In the classroom we have 45 minutes, that's limited time to encourage the student to be prepared to engage in reading and discussion, listening and discussion, writing and discussion of what they have written, and they are scheduled to attend other classes where the language is not targeted by the academic content of the course. So 45 minutes a day is not enough. Five class meetings per week is not enough. I have worked in block scheduling and the 45 minutes or 40-45 minutes that we have for teaching and block scheduling is good if the teachers would actually teach the full hour and a half. It would work. Time is limited to introduce them to again basic reading, basic writing, basic grammar, and so this year, this is the first time that I see them for 45 minutes and all I have to target is the literature aspect. If we have time, we encourage, of course, the vocabulary development. If we have time, we encourage them to let's go back and look at the grammar so we can do like a comparative study, how do you write it or say it in first language, how do you write it in English. But the main target has been literature and, of course, the preparation for state tests. So 45 minutes are basically 5 minutes to set up the class like I would say roll call or get materials available for them, and then the

40 minutes target the literature that we are studying, which would be poems, short stories, a novel, but time is not in our favor to where we can say we can spend more time making sure that you are getting more listening skills, more speaking skills time.

We have become almost like read, translate, and get the basic idea of what the piece of literature is expressing. Time management is important because how we have it structured here at this school; they only have 40 minutes, 50 minutes at the most, for 45 minutes to do the actual work and instruction in the classroom. Understanding that we need to cover so much material per nine weeks, that we need to cover so much stuff in the semester is usually you hurry along and you touch on things that you know they already outlined for you in the curriculum that you need to touch because it might be on the TAKS exam and it's all funneled, it's all channeled to production at the results towards the end of the year for the TAKS. So that's why the time is really too, is fast and even the students admit that the school year goes faster it seems.

Time management also I think it kind of goes back to our lack of ESL here at this particular campus, because students don't have a class period where they kind of get that support. I don't want to say necessarily a study hall, but maybe somewhere during some period you report to a tutor or you report someone who can help fill in the gaps that you didn't that 50-minute or 55 minute class. I think is just being able to dedicate time to all the students that we have, especially limited English learners and I don't think we have enough time in class. You know, you have 30 students. You have your GT students who are demanding questions of going further and beyond. You have our special ed. students that you have to make certain accommodations for and then you have the student that sometimes you don't have that five minutes at that particular lesson to be able to sit down or stand next to and explain something further.

Well it's kind of like you have to maybe make a complete set of plans for that particular kind of student so that you have a plan when they walk in so that that doesn't happen. Because sometimes you will teach and lecture the whole class and then you're trying to figure out how to simplify the lesson for them. So I kind of think we need to have two complete different plans. Maybe as a professional, maybe having more time to as a department meet and plan specific plans for that target group that would be, of course, ideal, but like I said its ideal. If the kids know that you're tired and you just want to barely meet the expectations of whoever is our supervisor, they know it. They know you don't like what you're doing. So they in turn don't respond....they respond to that negativeness."

*Literacy/Language.* ELL students may come to school with various academic abilities in their native language. They may be illiterate in their native language. They

may have difficulty learning a new language at the high school level. Depending on the academic proficiency of their native language, the ELL student has a relatively short period of time to learn a new language. Students may not feel adequate enough to perform in the new language in such a short period of time. Moreover, students may have a stigma about speaking in English amongst peers due to feelings about inadequacy, peer perception, or ridicule. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Literacy/Language.

**“They are constantly referring to their first language as their basic form of comprehension.** Well, these students that come into us in 9th and 10th grade that really need a lot of English, and it could be another language, but here they need English. Most of the students that I see at high school can read and write in Spanish. Some of them have continued, which would be the equivalent of high school, preparatoria. Those students have the study skills, which include thinking skills. All they have to do is transfer those skills into English and they are able to succeed. What I've seen in my students, they are very literate students. They have very high reading comprehension. I haven't seen problems with their literacy skills as being able to read, comprehend, evaluate, analyze. The only time that they do have a problem, it's not so much a language deficiency, as it is a probably geographical problem where they were, if they came from Mexico, they came from small towns where they might have to gone to school 2nd and 3rd grade, didn't go 4th, 5th, 6th, went back 7th, 8th. So there are huge gaps in their education. I don't attribute that so much as to their language deficiency, as much as it is to just an educational deficiency. The students that have a language deficiency, it's just that. They are able to comprehend, to analyze lectures. They are able to follow along in discussions. They're just not able to communicate that in the English language. The students have finished 6th grade, primaria, and have not continued secundaria, they have been out for one or two years from schooling and they have been placed in high school, those students face triple work. They have to continue learning their basic skills of reading, writing, comprehension, and then having to transfer all this abilities into English.

They do feel lost. I see that they are the ones that are more at risk, that they want to quit their education, because they see that by the time they pick up the necessary skills of basic literacy they are so far behind and they see what's in the future for them is more testing in a language that is difficult for them and basically they have missed out on a lot of the study skills that they need, which means reading in first language, writing in first language, and

transferring those skills to any other language. They just need a little guidance, but they will learn. But the majority of our students don't have the skills or the means to learn.

My experience of seeing that the student needs at least half a day, which would be three class periods of nothing but language development, reading, writing skills development, and introduction to the grammar and literature, and delayed testing, only testing the local level just to pretest and posttest, but delayed testing at least three years as mandated by the state until they have been here three years in the United States studying. Then give them that chance, but we have given them enough time in the classroom to feel comfortable with the language, be able to at least read and comprehend at a comfortable level where they are not translating into Spanish or any other language.

I think that what is happening is that for whatever reason they're reading comprehension levels are very, very low. When they come to our grade level, which is the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level, many of them come in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> grade level, 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, but once again the skills, the reading comprehension skills, they don't have them. So that's why we have the major problem. I think that that's one of the most important skills that we should be addressing with them. Again the vocabulary, I think they need to concentrate on that, so that they can stand up from there. Because they come in not knowing the language and then they're given all these words. At least because I teach English and I see that like a huge barrier, because if they don't understand the words, they can't comprehend so that affects the content.

Literacy, I think is another problem that we have as far as being able to read an honest to goodness novel. As far as literacy is concerned, they're not much into reading. It seems like it's less reading that they do, because, and then again you have some minus points technology does to you and I know because my own kids, I know how they write to each other. We understand that people don't write letters anymore. They would rather communicate through via our cellular phones or I've seen how kids communicate also when they do their communication text mail. They write only in phrases and they write in codes also. I like you, for instance. They just put a U in there instead of y-o-u. That synthesizes everything and that makes it easy for them to communicate better in their own subculture, I'm going to say, so that also fractionalizes what they read and what they can read...newspapers, most of the kids do not read newspapers, most of the kids do not read periodicals or weekly magazines. So literacy as far as that is concerned, I think it becomes a problem. But I think it's not only particular of English learners.

We come back to the same idea that the objective is to pass the TAKS and anything else falls to the way side, I guess. In the classroom there are a lot of students and they are all mixed together by English language learners and the

ones that know perfect English. So you still have to teach everybody, but you know they need more help. I feel that they're afraid to ask a question or something. So I just try to be more open with the students, like let me know if you have a question. Because they could have a word problem and it's not the chemistry part that they are having trouble with, it's just like a general word and that's what we find a lot in our TAKS test. Instead of reading comprehension that's really triggering the English language learners that it's just a simple word like that they missed, like except. They don't read it carefully. Its simple things not like the real abstract. If they still don't understand it, like just little keywords in Spanish and that will trigger their understanding. And I try to use both languages so they can remember the words, like okay this is what it means using their native language. I am guilty of it too because if they don't understand it in English I will try and explain it to them in Spanish so that they can understand it. They are constantly referring to their first language as their basic form of comprehension. But the proper Spanish that, you know, should be spoken I am not real into that and so sometimes probably as we live in an area our language that we're dealing with may not be as proper as we think it is and it may not be corrected as it possibly could be."

*Home/Community.* The home and community are the environments students are reared and have a great influence on them. This sets the foundation for an individual. People are products of their environment. Parents at home have much influence on their children. People in a community set the standards for that community. With those standards, the method of communication and surviving in this environment are embedded in what is valued by its constituents. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Home/Community.

**"It doesn't help the fact that they don't speak English at home, that's a big barrier.** What is a home? Home is where we learn the importance of education. Home is where we have our parents guiding us. Home is where we have our safety zone. Home is where we feel safe and protected and comfortable and sometimes our kids don't have that. Now in our language, the English language, being focused on learning better English, I would say that, most of our children as soon as it gets to Friday they cross the bridge. They go to the family members in Mexico and they come back on Sunday. What do they hear? Spanish, 100% Spanish. We don't practice the English language. We go home, we see novel as part of culture, too. A lot of these kids I think they could be tied to our neighbor here of Mexico and they come in and these

kids... are constantly referring to their first language as their basic form of comprehension. Well in the home, from what I know, they probably just speak the Spanish language or the other language other than English. So I don't think they practice it a lot at home. So I would suggest more importantly committing for extracurricular activities where they could practice more the language. If they go home, it is very limited that they will speak the English language and they just need more practice to become better acquainted with it. It doesn't help the fact that they don't speak English at home, that's a big barrier. It doesn't help them that they don't hear it if it's the language at home until they get to school. I think that's big challenge on their part.

And the community, I don't know I feel like they need maybe more support from the community. English is not the major language here in Eagle Pass. It's Spanish and most of us know that. You go to anyone's house and they're going to be speaking Spanish. They watch T.V. in Spanish. Everything is Spanish. So it is affecting their work here at school, because the background isn't there for them. If they don't practice it, they're not going to learn it and the home also comes with the parents, the motivation from the parents, how they motivate the kids. A lot of it is in the culture. The education was not important to the culture until recently. So now a lot of kids don't...I mean, there's more emphasis on it now, but there wasn't before. But, I think that has a lot to do with it too. I mean, here it's just this is a Spanish community.

Because of our area, because of being on the border and because of the type of the jobs that are available to our parents, our families on the border, we do have a lot of students that tend to migrate up North to good jobs and the focus of these families and I think you would see it in any border town or any small town, the focus of these families is survival. So its did I make it today, did I make it this week, and I'm going to make it next month, did I make enough money for this year. Whereas the future it just seems too...it's too far away for them. So getting an education, getting that high school diploma, isn't the focus. And we find that a lot. I don't want to say it's so much a language thing as it's maybe probably a socioeconomic thing. We also get students that come in from Mexico and that's a completely different culture, even though we mostly are Mexican-American.

It is a completely different culture. Where as a young lady getting a high school diploma is probably the biggest thing you're going to do with your education. And way to go mija, you got that high school diploma and that's it. So the thought of going on to college, even now in 2006 in these young girls, it isn't there. I have juniors that are already talking about, oh I'm going to get married as soon as I graduate and that's it. In this community, you have to know Spanish to get a job, I guess you could say. Because even with me that my parents didn't talk Spanish and I didn't talk Spanish, it was real hard for me to find a job until I learned Spanish. You will see it in May right now; we have a lot of students that are going to be withdrawn, because they are going

to go up north. The priority is did I get those \$3,000-\$4,000 in the summer months are we going to be able to do it next year and I need my son to go with me to work every year in the seasonal jobs. So school is left behind. Many of our students take care of their siblings while their parents work Saturdays. So what happens there? We lose them. That's why we're losing them. It's not that they don't want to come. Some of them don't, but some of them really can't.

Afternoon programs, you have no idea how much I have to bribe and threaten my kids for them to come to the program. And I have had 115 attend the afternoon program and I have had 135 attend the Saturday program or vice versa, but most of them are mine. So where are the others, what is 900 freshman. I only do one grade of English. Where are the other many students in the grade I teach that need the programs? The community is not really helping, Parent Nights at this school and probably the same thing everywhere that we see the parents that we don't really want to see. The parents that come to our school, to our campus, are the parents of the kids that are doing extremely well. We don't want to see those parents. Those kids are traditionally good students. They are not low students. The parents that we want to see they don't come. You gotta have the attitude and then you gotta go back to the family. You gotta have a good base to start with and if you have that, well, it's certainly; it's going to be a neat thing when you get it all together. You gotta have it all together and it's hard to get it all together. I don't care what you're doing in your life. It's hard to get everything together like you want it.

Eagle Pass and my community suffer what the nation suffers. We are small I am going to guess of the community and as much as the society is a reflection of the largest side in our country. By there I mean the fact that the traditional family is also dwindling. We don't have mom and dad there anymore for various instances that those happen. We don't have....we have a lot of single parents and that is going to hurt. I see the writing on the wall that the family structure in our community and I am going to say the Mexican-American community is not as strong as it used to be. However, we still continue to have well-behaved kids and we have seen it because whenever we go to different functions with the kids to another town, San Antonio, at times to Austin, the kids really deliver. The kids really behave, but the community is not what it used to be. That, I think is probably, it comes with growth also. It comes with the society. It comes with the impact that we have because of the television, because of the movies, because of, even the internet also, as not helping at times. So the community is still somehow responsive, but not as strong as it used to be...these students that I am talking about, I see them having a very good home life. I really do. They come in and when you see the type of attitude and character that they have, many of them, I feel like that they have got a lot of support and backing from where they come and they have manners. They show respect. They want to learn English and, again, I see

many of these students that are just going to...they are going to make it. They are going to make things happen for them. I think it's shifting though. Now I notice that most of my students are speaking a lot of English, which is good. I think it's changing gradually, but it's changing. Why is it? I really don't know, but I think we're getting there. Little by little we are changing our attitude into the English language. Yeah, I still have some kids in the classroom, hey ma'am I don't know how to say...yes you do, try it.....But if you don't tell them that, they're going to speak Spanish. I catch myself speaking a lot of Spanish myself. But when I turn around and say what? They have to answer in English."

*Resources (funding, programs, materials, and training).* Resources are the tools or methods that teachers rely on and that enhance a student's education. The manners in which resources are provided and allocated have a profound impact on the teacher's capability to teach concepts and the students ability to grasp those concepts, including language. Availability of resources facilitates teaching. However, resources are just a tool and do not necessarily result in a high performing educator. To optimize resources, educators must know how to best utilize them, in specific situations to best accomplish the desired effect or goal. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Resources.

The following quote addresses funding for resources.

**"I think there is.** Well, you know, our school district does a good job of giving us lots of different avenues to use with our different kids, especially in English here. Well, as funding we do get a lot of that. I am not saying, you know, I don't know the numbers and the amount, but I know we do get a lot of funding and a lot of help with that. I know, on the other hand, there is never enough. You could always have more and, of course, in that case there you may become a little wasteful or, you know, use it avenues that it doesn't need to be used, but I say that we do have adequate funding and it would be nice to have more (funding). As far as I'm aware we do have the monies for teacher training and as teachers we do receive training that covers our ESL training. A lot of us, most of us I'd say, are not ESL certified, but we do have some training to help with the students. You know the money is there for training. I think there is. I'm not too familiar with it, but yeah I think there is funding for ESOL, because that's the same thing right? English language learners and



ESOL? Yeah, I think there is funding for it. I am not sure though, but again in the math department I don't see it as much. So I know I have students from Piedras and everything, but I don't get any special materials, special money, or anything for helping them out. So, I don't know.

The quote below relates to programs offered.

It almost seems like we are going through the situation of making sure that the student has a passing grade in my class, not insuring that the student is acquiring the skills within either the English I or the resource reading class. My previous experience was that I did have a three-hour block and they were given credit for the regular English class and then local credit for reading and preparation for the state test, but nonetheless it was three hours of English. That was cut down to two hours to accommodate more students at our high school for the beginner program for ESL. So we cut it down to giving them credit for English I and reading. Now that we see only the English I by a regular teacher and then the reading class in a separate resource room with computers, it seems that time management and resources are not put to the best of the advantage for the student. It almost seems like we are going through the situation of making sure that the student has a passing grade in my class, not insuring that the student is acquiring the skills within either the English I or the resource reading class. It seems that we are subdividing the time engaged in English learning, instead of maintaining a program where one or two instructors in the same classroom provide that instruction with direct teaching, with the help of technology like the computer programs or listening centers, instead of having the student feel that they have seven classes, seven different teachers, and seven different grades to be worried about. We don't have any type of learning English program, even as simple as the ones that they advertise on T.V. like English simaveras, or anything like that, we don't have in school to help these students be able to get those essential vocabularies at some point. A newcomer program would probably foresee a program where the student is all morning engaged only in language learning or all afternoon and allowing the students to have an opportunity to learn the language with the basic reading, writing, listening, speaking skills, learn the grammar, appreciate the literature, and then have them move on to a...not a regular English class, but a beginner regular English class where they are given extra time or extra attention to continue appreciating the literature that they have to learn for 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, plus continuing developing their vocabulary, their reading and writing skills without the need to be competing with the other students that will be on-level. We have ESL programs set up at the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade level, but once you get to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade you should have the building blocks to survive in a regular classroom environment. Unfortunately because of our separate campus system, we do have a lot of newcomers or a lot of students that don't have those basic building blocks come in at 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade and at this time we don't have a definite program for them. We don't have a newcomer program

for those this is their first year in a United States school system. At our level I don't think, I think we need resources. Because I don't think there's a program or anything helping them at 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I know that they have it at 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, but I don't feel that we have the resources at 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Because they exit them from the program and so there is no program. So they don't have any materials that will help under their situation. They might not be passing because of absences, because of problems at home, because of other issues coming to hand, but they can and will pass the test and that's what I mean about resources, but how many kids take advantage of it, very few. Now we don't have a bus on Saturdays, so what happens to all the kids that live way out like in Quemado and Rosita Valley, which is very far from here. I'm talking about 10 miles at least. They don't have a ride."

This quote addresses the availability and use of materials and other resources.

"The learning tools that they need, they don't have them. Then we wonder why they don't learn. As far as trying to come up with ideas and trying to come up with summarizations and I know we have excellent programs and books nowadays. The text book, any textbook that the school district gets, most of the time has additional supplementary material and I think for instance the program that I have, the book that I have, in my subject area has a wealth of information electronically that for instance power point presentations and the power point presentations that have like, diagrams. They have summarizations of the section and the chapter. They have drawings and here in this school most of us have access to a projection, a power point projector. As a matter of fact, I have one. This year I managed to install one on top of my room, which is readily accessible. Any time I just want to plug it in. I also have a laptop. Most everybody has access to laptop, too. So I think that's as electronically and use of media is helping a lot too. The availability of electronics and digital and stuff that is readily available in the campus. I think we have plenty of help, as far as the training for the kids and for the teachers too. We know we have this group of kids and especially being a neighbor to Mexico here, and we have got a lot of resources and they are central office and our high school. They have many materials that we have access to. There are support groups that we have meetings from time to time on these students that need English and we have meetings and it's kind of tied from school to school. We have an excellent program here. It's called the PLATO program, the Saturday Program. We do it on Saturdays. It has a real good grammar program. It even has a program where it's by hrw.com, I think. Whereas the student is given a prompt and they write a particular essay. The computer will actually give them a score. It scores it for them. It's an awesome.... I love that resource. I think that's what I really need, because science is very conceptual. Like, an atom, how can they picture an atom? They have a lot of visual aids on the internet that I could put together with maybe power point, interactive. They also have like the CD-ROMs that they

can practice on that. So I think for science technology is very important so they can see something visually and that is what I think these English language learners really need...more visuals and technology. The only visuals I have in my class are transparencies or me writing on the board. I don't have the technology to do power points or anything like that. So that is what I try to use. When you are talking about technology, how many of our kids really have the computers at home? The internet at home? The learning tools that they need, they don't have them. Then we wonder why they don't learn. Pre AP kids have it. Do they take advantage of it, not really, because I don't feel they're being challenged either. The way we are with 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade within two years we have to have them ready to take the TAKS test and pass it. So the school gives us lots of materials and again support groups and we get a lot of help with that. We really do. We don't have the accommodations on the TAKS for them to use an English first language dictionary so that they can try to write their essays. I have seen bilingual material, but in lower levels, like in elementary levels. In high school level, I don't really see.... I don't see Spanish material unless you're in a Spanish class. So everything is geared for them to learn English, but then again you still go back to where the teachers translate for them. So, I mean off the top of my head I can't think of any material. I guess because in my subject area I just, we don't deal with it as much."

The following quote discusses training.

"They bring beautiful ideas, but sometimes we don't have the time to implement so much stuff that they bring. Some of the ideas are good and some we can put into work, but we know what we need to do because we're all catering to the fact that we are going to go for the TAKS and we all want the kids to prosper and to pass the test. But the training that we get, I do not think, personally, is too effective; most of us, and maybe because of the fact that I am a village elder here at this school. Not that I've seen everything, but sometimes it's just rehash of things that we've seen before. I personally tend to be biased in as much as the training; it sometimes is not very realistic. We call it some kind of torture, because we've seen all of this before. I don't think I've ever gone through one that has to deal with a different language, because everybody's already under the assumption, everybody knows Spanish. We help them out, bilingual, and that's how it works here, I guess. I feel bad on that one, but for me I haven't received any like training focused just on ESOL students. I have received training on At Risk students, training on students that have like discipline problems and stuff like that, but nothing focused on just ESOL. We don't have the teachers available to them that are able to communicate bilingually. Even though, we are a bilingual community, to be able to correctly communicate, is I think difficult. A lot of resources, since we don't have the program, we don't have a lot of Spanish-English translating devices, dictionary. I have had training. I remember I went to workshop with

integrating the power point with cameras, like taking pictures, and I thought that was very good. Like, maybe when we do labs, do the lab process just take pictures of the next step, what classroom we are going use, but again I would like to have that technology to assist us. So with resources that's what I am lacking too. That we could get training maybe to better them? Well we do get training, but I don't think we get the materials. Resources in teacher training. On that I don't think I can elaborate, because I feel that a teacher is born, is not made. You make your resources. I don't, off the top of my head, I don't recall anything about.... I feel so awkward here (teacher training)."

*Attitude.* The outlook of an individual is a key point. Teachers and students who are determined to overcome challenges may have a strong impact on success. The determination of an individual to connect with the available resources, environment, and teaching assistance will increase the likelihood of success. The attitude of an individual is developed through a variety of influences such as, parents, community, mentors, social status, geographic location, etc. A person's outlook is a strong motivator in guiding his or her thought processes and actions. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Attitude.

**"Sometimes I feel that we are not here 100% for the kids.** The way I perceive it the school system is setup for them to learn English and be able to graduate fluent in English, but there are some that aren't. I still feel it goes back to the teachers, the administration, everyone caters to the students. If you don't understand it, let me translate it for you. Oh, you didn't get it, well maybe this next time you'll get it. Things like that that we just cater to them for. A lot of them feel that it's our job to give them the education, even if they're not learning what they're supposed to be learning. The attitude that I see from parents, you take care of my child at school, make them learn, and once in a while I might be involved, but not all the time. The attitude that I see in administration is get them ready for tests and they are concerned at what pace students are learning. The attitude that some teachers have that they are afraid, because their failure rate is high.

I tell my administrators, let me work with them. The kids know I work both programs. There is no reason for them not to succeed, but they're going to go because they're going to make it. I have never curved a grade and I am very proud of that, very proud, because my kids earn their grades. Ma'am one point, I don't have it, search me, I don't have it. Because you know what, the

state is not going to give you the point. All the tests that we take, you know the professional tests that we have to take, the TAKS that they have to take, oh the state is going to think, Ay pobresito, give him a point. No, they won't. The attitude that I see in myself is I care. I would like to have the magic means of helping all the students learn. Sometimes I feel that we are not here 100% for the kids. It's just another job and it should not be another job. I feel that, I don't know, maybe motivation skills for teachers. I think the teaching staff is not where it should be and if the way we look at the students, like you're just going to graduate period. Well, you're never going to college. Face it, you'll probably be a mechanic like your father, a migrant worker like your parents, or be a mother. We see all these girls getting pregnant. So we teachers sometimes don't see above and beyond a hope for them and give them a hope that they don't have. Students don't have that. They are content. We have good teachers, but many of them....Eeeh, you have whomever....No hombre. He is going to give you problems and I hate it when they do that. They are labeling already because of their previous experiences with a child or a student or because of what they have heard in the halls or in the offices. They've already formed a picture of that child, student in the classroom and that's where I think they're wrong.

The attitude needs to change. The attitude needs to change, but once again, that the teacher's attitude and the student's attitude. Well I think with my students I see a positive attitude. It's just, they want to learn. You know what, these kids...these students are excellent. I see the attitudes as they come in here I am totally impressed with the quality of character that they have, the attitude that they want to move forward with it, and, hey, they are workers. I just have nothing but positive things to say about them because of their attitude and their character. It's excellent. It really is. That's not a problem. If anything they come really wanting to learn. It's just that they're so far behind that it's very difficult, but sometimes some of these students are at the top because they come wanting to learn and wanting to graduate and exceed. I generally see that the students are willing to do more reading, some writing, but speaking they always seem very shy or reserved about speaking. They still have that hesitation that they might not say exactly what they are thinking in Spanish or in another language and translating it to English. The attitude of the students is they do want to learn, they do care, but they are scared because of every obstacle that is presented. Within a new week period that they are just barely started schooling, whether its their first year or second year, they are taking a practice test and they feel like, I am not ready to take a test and instead of feeling like, okay this a challenge and I will take a positive attitude that I didn't do well on this pretest, I am going to challenge myself to try to do better.

I used to say that 1 in 5 students or 1 in 7 students were willing to work extra hard and within a semester show enough confidence and ability to transfer to a regular program. Now I see that maybe 1 or 2 out of 20 students have a

positive attitude that yes, I can learn. A lot of the situations that I have seen in behavior is because they are frustrated. Seven classes is too many and every teacher is asking them to perform, as if they were at a 9<sup>th</sup> grade or 10<sup>th</sup> grade level without recognizing that this student is barely beginning to learn English, like a child barely beginning to walk and we are asking them to run. Student attitude is that they are going to try just enough to make a little passing grade, which would be the minimum requirement, but not enough to show excellence and be ready to move to the regular program or even challenge themselves with a higher program, like a PREP program, because they feel that they are not prepared. They don't feel confident and most of the time they are upset. They feel that they are being pushed too fast. So they need to understand that they need to put more effort outside of the classroom to master it. That attitude is not there anymore, to be more responsible, and we need to teach that too. I have the English language learners that are like I mentioned before, the young ladies who are thinking of getting their high school, even young men, getting their high school diploma, with this I am able to get a steady job, not necessarily advancing more than their high school diploma. I'm going to work at H.E.B., I'm going to work at Wal-Mart, that's all I need. The other group I have English language learners that are here, they want to learn English, but they want to go back to Mexico and study there in the university and their needs are completely different. They feel they just need to know enough English to survive in the business world and that's it, that's all I really need. You do have a small, unfortunately smaller, population of English language learners that want to learn enough English because they want to go on to college, because they are going to live their rest of their lives or they are living their lives here in the United States and those are sad cases, because sometime just the vocabulary at our level, we feel that sometimes just too much we expect them of a little too late. They don't have background. They are pushing themselves too hard and maybe they're not going to get enough language to primarily pass the TAKS."

*Teaching Practices.* Teachers have many responsibilities and many of those are showcased by their teaching practices. Lesson plans and methods of delivery are vital parts of teaching students in a limited amount of time. Furthermore, teachers must be responsive to the needs of their students to help them overcome obstacles. Effective teaching practices means knowing what are your student's needs, available resources, and teacher strengths and weaknesses mesh to provide instruction. The

following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Teaching Practices.

**“How can they smell the rose if they just see the rose?** I think we are watering down to some extent our education and they go by through our lives trying to make it, which most of them do, but I wonder how much they really learned, because we are so focused in covering so much that's given to us. I think that they need...the curriculum needs to change. It should change. I feel that if we would teach grammar and really, really focus on diagramming sentences and fully understanding what part of speech, which word does what, they would develop the reading comprehension, would be developed, the skills, because they don't have the skills. In the past, my effort was for them to feel that they were able to listen and understand. They were able to read and understand. It was language development and it was beginning at their appropriate level, which would be if it was elementary level and they were high school students that would be the level that we started. As of the present time, I was instructed to present only the literature aspect of the English I class with modifications of the selections, modification of the writing assignments, so basically I see that I am getting students that know maybe how to read quite well in first language and all I am asking them is that now they have read and analyze literature in second language.

English is bad enough, much less Shakespearean English. I feel that a curriculum should be setup to whereas we have grammar only. Just teach grammar period. The way we used to learn it. Teach reading in isolation, which I think they do at a Jr. High level, if I'm not mistaken. But many times they come to our grade level, high school level, without the reading skills or the grammar skills. They don't really know what a noun or verb is. And we don't have the time to teach it in isolation. As a matter of fact, when I came into teaching a number of years ago, I was told not to teach grammar in isolation. That's the way we learned. We learned spelling through what was it, not really memorization, it was just writing the word 100 times if need be. I think basically it's what we learned in the classroom at the time that we were students. When I think and I know that their reading skills are low or their writing skills. I actually coerce them to come in on Saturdays, like I tell them; okay I will give you 10 extra points on test points or whatever it is. It just that I want them to come, because they work on that particular program for the grammar about 3 hours and then the 2 hours they just work on the essay. And in my point of view, if they make a 2, which is a passing score for TAKS of course, they're ready for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade level. Many of the freshmen that we have here right now did not pass to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, about 300 of them okay. They did not pass from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade level. We don't have time for them. So what happens? They take summer school and a miracle happens. They're here. Now we deal with them when they're not prepared. So it's like, rush, rush, rush, rush, get them out of here, rush, rush,

rush, get out of them here...wait a minute....wait a minute. We need to come down to the teaching period. Forget the text for one moment. Teach them to think and the text will come on its' own.

I am one that says, hey, open the door. Let's try something else. Everyday is a new day and these students are like that and I think the more things we can visions, or ideas, or concepts that we can move forward with, hey I am game. Let's change. Let's go and I would like to think that we do that here and we do that type of attack with it. So you know I do try to accommodate where they are in a setting where they are comfortable and they can learn off their peers. Students are more comfortable around other students than they are around the teacher always being around them. I try to do that. I do try to help them with translations as much as possible, because if they are able to understand it in their first language, chances are they will be able to comprehend what's going on in class when I'm speaking English. I tend not to translate in classes. I want them to get used the every day language that is used in the classroom. Get used to what the objectives sound like, what the instructions sound like, and its part of their, I guess just immersing them into the English language. You develop through the years, experience you develop by the years how to put it together. Ay me puso un 70. I made it. Oh, it's a 65, don't worry about it. Well, yeah worry about it, because you can do much better than this. And if the time that we teachers don't take the time in preparing for them, if we're not well prepared to teach how on earth do we expect the kids to learn? I've been teaching for only several years, but I've seen it happen.

In those years I've seen a change from holistic to now we need to teach them. Now we need to know the basics. Wait a minute, that's how we learned. We had to start from scratch. Don't see the picture. How can they smell the rose if they just see the rose? Make them smell it. Make them see it. But if we don't do it, the teachers don't help the kids across the bridge, we are never going to make it. And I don't care how much money of incentives the state is willing to give us. It's still up to us, the teachers, making managing the time correctly and the way we manage the time, make those things, the same expectations from the kids.

I think we are role models. Kids see us, see through us, see the real persons in us, and they know whether we are here for the money or because we are here because we are here because we like it. Well, you have gotta be....there's patience, there's...you understand your kids, and hopefully you do, and you look at each one individually, and getting the time needed to, you know, make assessments, and hopefully with being patient with him and having the correct info in front of him that he is going to be, you know, productive for you. I think it's very important for the teachers to come up with summer training in ESL or at least in addressing the needs of the students as a whole.



Well I think it's difficult because you will have two or three classroom so you are trying to teach the other 25 and it's very difficult to come down to their level without it affecting the rest of the class. So I think something's got to be done about that to where they're not left behind, maybe. The main thing, I think a very important thing is a lot of group work, because the...you said English language learners, like they know Spanish already, or any other language other than English. Well, there are a lot of people in classroom, right? But they have perfected the English language because they have been here since kindergarten. So they get the help from other team members. I think they feel more comfortable with teamwork. So they would talk to them in Spanish, but they know the English language so they're helping out the other students, so a lot of teamwork, group activities. I usually try to do peer tutoring. I do like to pair up a student that is having difficult with English with one of my, probably a GT student or just a student who's just more advanced. So that way they can level each other out and they can communicate easier. Sometimes it's hard. You can't always have group work. More one to one in their native language I do. Like, I will do the instruction right in English and then if they have trouble, I would explain it to them. They would come to me and I would explain the information in Spanish. I think numbers are universal and, unless I give a word problem where they don't understand the language, but I do interpret for them. My class is not solely English. I do bilingual also. I'm not bilingual certified, but I do talk both languages in the classroom. So I am guessing that that does affect them, like on the test, because I do interpret it for them. So we cater to them, I guess you could say."

*Challenges and Accomplishments.* Challenges and accomplishments are the obstacles and victories that are shared or overcome by teachers and students. These may stem, on many levels, from a number of reasons. They may also stem from inside or outside the school walls such as, home, parents, social and financial situations, developmental stage, gender, etc. Regardless of its origin, the ELL student must experience success to boost self-confidence. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Challenges/Accomplishments.

**"Motivation is one thing that's very difficult to do in the classroom.** I see that the challenges that my students face would be to learn the language, learn the content of each class that they have, and be prepared within no more than three years to be functioning at the adequate level for testing, for state tests,

and for succeeding with their credits for graduation. As these students move forward, they face the challenges ahead of them and stuff; I see many positive things moving forward with them. I really do, especially a lot of them are much disciplined and they do a good job. I am impressed with them. I really am. A good majority are overcoming the barrier, the Spanish barrier here in Eagle Pass. They are seeing that there's life outside of Eagle Pass and it not always has to be so, like, Spanish, Spanish, Spanish, Spanish, Spanish, but outside of Eagle Pass the English language is used more than here.

There are other challenges that we have and the accomplishments that I can see in my field of work, I know that they are accomplishing what is expected of us, in as much as passing, again the TAKS. We have a lot of students and you'll see them walking down the halls. They've got their little electronic translators. They put 100% into it and you know you have the student that was reading or speaking at an English 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level, basic just survival skills passing the TAKS, being able to communicate in an essay, being able to write good essays, being able to analyze and communicate in English, have thoughts, really demonstrate their intelligence with their language skills. How do you measure an accomplishment of the kids? The way the state measures it and the way how the newspaper puts it out, say for instance to the community, is that what are the results of the TAKS? Well, that would be a lot of...the challenge would be the...understanding the reading. That's the big challenge for the English language learners. So they need a lot more practice to do well on the exams. They need more time to feel that they have accomplished something. We are getting these students at an age where their vocabulary and of course all their language learning they should've gotten in elementary which is when the students absorb language easier and it's kind of harder for them to grasp all these different grammar rules that they aren't familiar with.

Challenges. I hear them talking about a student that he has got to be able to look at words and you know what he has got to carry a dictionary with him the whole time and that's the challenge all of the time. He has gotta be able to have the energy to pull that dictionary out, look at the word, and I am talking about an English-Spanish dictionary, one that can...or maybe another language besides Spanish. It doesn't have to be Spanish, but he has got to have a bank there, a word bank, that he can look at and get a meaning from and then attach it to the situation that he is facing.

I think the most important is the motivation. That keeps being motivated into learning for their sake. Not for anyone, not for the teachers, not for the district, not for I don't care who it is. I've always told my kids, it's you that's important. Motivation is one thing that's very difficult to do in the classroom. When you see those kids with so many different problems, learning means nothing. It's not a word that they're worrying about right now. They're worrying about surviving today. They're worrying about making it another day. They're worrying about the divorce rates, the pregnancies, the drugs, the

gangs. So it's not really how do we challenge them? That's one question that I don't think a million answers will get it. How do we really motivate them? I think that what has worked for me is that like one kid said, are you for reals? And when they ask me that, I've been asked that several times, and I just say, yes. What you see is what you get. You are the most important thing in my life, other than my family, my students.

Very few teachers are you going to find out there, that this is just a job. It should not be a job. We are molding those kids. They are depending on us. They depend on us as role models, because sometimes they don't have it at home. I would think 98% of the time they don't have a good role model and that's what we all need. Someone that we can look up to and say wait a minute. I can make it, because I am not alone. Challenges definitely are going to be the home, because the motivation has to be there from the parents. The parents have to be able to push and down here in this culture a lot of people don't go for that and so these students aren't trying to do as much. I think culture plays a major role here, because it's just....I mean, you do get some people that are like, you have to go to school, you want to be better, look at us, you don't want to go through what we've gone through, but then you do have the successful people also. I mean the people that do go out and they become lawyers and doctors and everything. I think Eagle Pass is beginning to shift away from that, but still it is having an affect. That is one of the greatest challenges that I see as an instructor. We don't have enough time in the classroom or within the three or four years that they are in high school to get them enough language to succeed and continue on either college or university. Well exactly that, like I try my best to take time at the end of the class or before I get started to explain to them in detail apart from the class because they need a further explanation than I give to the rest, but it's very difficult because of the time."

### **Interview Protocol (Axial) White Group**

*Assessment.* Assessment characterizes the exams and tests administered at all levels. It encompasses the gamut from state level standardized exams (TAKS) to teacher informal observations. These assessments are utilized to provide previous educational background and monitor ongoing academic progress. As a school, these results, disaggregated by population and subpopulations on the TAKS test, are public information. In Texas, these results play a large part in a school's and/or school

district's rating. The ELL must be able to pass the TAKS within two years of entering the Texas educational system. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Assessment.

**“A couple of weeks ago when they found out their scores that they’re not graduating, their hopes were crushed, because they know that the only reason why they didn’t pass is the language.** It affects their learning. In a good way, it can be a good way to show improvement, but it can also hurt, I believe, because teachers might....For example, the TAKS, they might be too focused on the material, on showing the material, that they’re not paying so much attention to those who need a little bit of, not necessarily explaining, but translating. So they won’t slow down. They won’t go over certain things again. Sometimes because of time constraints, like it can hurt them. There also benefits in the sense that it helps measure their progress, if there has been any or whatever there has been. It will help measure progress. And also, for example the language, the English teachers, they have to focus on them, a little bit more so they can pass those assessments, because it will reflect them on. I would say that maybe in the language arts area, it will help and the others area might not necessarily help as much because teachers are focused on the content of the area, the subject, not so much in teaching the second language learners. Whereas in the language department, language arts, the English teachers, they know they’re going to be tested, so they might focus a little bit more on these students. They might try to help them out a little bit more. Well it’s always good to monitor their progress. I just think that it will help for the teacher to mainly see the progress of the students. I guess observation is always a good assessment, but also written assessments. Always trying to have the students write in class and as far as for a test grade or something that will make them want to do the writing or push them a little bit more.

A lot of the testing is geared towards the student that knows the language. So the English language learner has a difficult time with the testing. There is very few testing that actually, you know, works or goes along to help them. As far as what I know, is we have the laws for, you know, to identify what level they are at, but the testing is mainly geared towards the on-level student and sometimes those students have to take that on-level test, which makes it, you know, difficult for them. I think assessment obviously is good. I think we run into a problem though, because we are expected to teach these students in a certain manner and we accomplish something with these students. They’re given an exam, let’s say a state exam, state assessment, that is at a much higher level than where we have them at. So if they’re at a 4<sup>th</sup> grade level reading, they’re still getting a 10<sup>th</sup> grade level exam and that makes it very difficult for them and it’s difficult for us to bring them from that 4<sup>th</sup> grade level reading to a 10<sup>th</sup> grade level within a 6 month period. Standardized

assessment is difficult for the second language learners in the understanding, the comprehending.

I feel that better assessment would include something that is more to their level, more I think structured around the fact that they are just learning a language. Also goes to their needs, is sensitive to the fact that they are just learning the English language. Quite often it is very difficult for students who have lesser vocabulary development than other students to be successful on a test. Those tests are based on either statewide or nationwide standards. They quite often use vocabulary words that these students are not familiar with and sometimes I think that they do not show a true reflection of what the student is capable of, because sometimes perhaps the student does not understand the question, they are not quite sure what is intended for the answers. It may not truly reflect what the student is capable of. When I hear assessment I kind of think about standardized assessment and I think that most student learners acquiring English have trouble with standardized tests. They don't have the language yet. If they fail at it, they take it to heart. So it affects their education. The TAKS test. You have a number of students who are not graduating this year because it's their second year here and they haven't mastered the language and so it is holding them back. A couple of weeks ago when they found out their scores that they're not graduating, their hopes were crushed, because they know that the only reason why they didn't pass is the language. So the testing is, I guess, I would say is kind of discriminatory against them because they are not at that level yet."

*Time Management.* This affinity referred to several topics regarding time. In one sense it referred to the amount of time a student had been in the American educational system. Moreover, it referred to the amount of time between a student initiating their American educational career and the time constraints in which these students are expected to pass the TAKS test. It also referred to the amount of time the student and teacher have in class for instructional purposes. Furthermore, it encompassed the amount of time an ELL may need to develop mastery in specific academic content area or skills. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Time Management.

**“It is difficult for those students to in two years become proficient and, you know, be able to...to do well in the regular classroom.** I think if they recognized what the true problem was, I think they could put more resources, time management being one of them, for example how much time do they need to spend on being pulled out of class if they need to be pulled out of class, what kind of courses they need to take, maybe different sections. They could put them in different sections. That would help. If all these students were put in one section, a teacher would probably have some kind of fundamental training on how to handle that. So that would help all the other teachers not have to deal with that one kid in class that doesn’t have the ability to read in English, read in Spanish, and so forth. We don’t have enough time to work with them to get them at the same level as the other kids have or should have, because they come in at an older age. The ones that come in when they’re in, maybe, elementary, it’s different because they think it’s easier to pick things up, but when they’re older we don’t have enough time to push them across the line, the borderline. Well, when you have the students, let’s say, within two years they have to learn the language. It’s difficult. They come into the country. They are brand new. You know, they have one or two years to move up and, of course, that is not enough time to become proficient in the language. But I know our law states that it is about two years that they are able to be in the ESL classes to, you know, bring up their proficiency and then, of course, they’re put into regular classrooms. It is difficult for those students to in two years become proficient and, you know, be able to...to do well in the regular classroom.

The main concern that we have is like I said before, they come in as 16 year old kids with credits from Mexico and they have very few time to learn, to have an opportunity to be exposed to everything that these other kids have been exposed to their whole lives. So that’s the main problem that we have. We don’t have enough time to work with them one on one. I would like to have a little more knowledge about how to manage my time. It seems that we don’t have, we’re just expected to know how to manage our time. Do this, this is your work, this is your job, just get it done. But that causes a lot of stress.

As far as me, this is not my whole life. I have a family too. So trying to balance family and work is difficult. And I would have liked to have some kind of training on how to manage my time. In order to work effectively with a student who has a language difficult you need to either put them with a peer or you need to work with them one-on-one. Because of class size and because of our current structure, which is basically we have 50 minutes and if you’re in a class that is TAKS tied, like I have three classes which is TAKS testing class, there is only so much time that you can spend working individually with a student. Now we do have an instructional aide for the first time in our department.

We have under 20 teachers in the department, so she can't give a lot of individual time for each class. Some classes that I have have 30 students in each class. If I have several that needed help along with the special ed. students that I could also have and sometimes of course it's both special ed. and ESL combined. So time management really does become a problem if you have large amounts of students and a student who needs way more one-on-one help. We try our best to do that, but we do run into a problem when we have only 45 minute classes. We have 45 minutes. After you take roll that roll has to be in 5 minutes after and it's now computerized. So there is no, let's wait until later. It has to be in at a certain time per period. So by the time we're done, we have maybe 35 minutes to teach something. Okay, now when these kids are a little bit, obviously, a little bit more behind than the rest, well then we're teaching at the level of the students, but then we have to get them on the side to teach them, at I hate to say a lower level, because it's not...we're not trying to teach them at a lower level. We're just trying to teach them at their level and higher and a little bit higher than that. So in a 45-minute period, that tends to be real difficult to do. And so what we usually have to do is shorten lessons or make, extend lessons through the following day, but what I have seen is that I still manage to get what I want out of them. It just takes me a little bit longer to do. I do the lesson and I always try to give them time. So manage the lesson time appropriately.

Don't make the lesson the whole period completely long. Or if you know it is a long lesson, instead of giving the lesson one day and then the next day do problems, then break the lesson in half or in steps maybe, and have, since I teach math, if I know that a certain problem requires a lot of steps that they might have forgotten already how to do, so I will just go back and do the lesson for 15 minutes and then have them practice like a good 20 minutes or whatever I just talked and in that time check for understanding and then move onto the next step. If one doesn't manage the time right then a lot of time might pass by before we can actually check for understanding and the students need to be checked. I guess, to me, every student needs to be checked constantly. Of course, some students come directly into the regular classroom, which means you have to work with them after school. I have students that I work with for the entire year, just trying to bring them up to the level at to where at least they can function, as far as their language is concerned. I stay after school. I mean the programs after school start until October and when I get my students the first day of school; you can tell right away which ones are the ones that are struggling with the language. So I speak them individually and I tell them if you need help, if you need anything, if you have problems, even with another class, I stay after school. So I stay after school all year around. Like, even if I'm not getting paid. But that is something that I do because I can sympathize with them because I went through the same thing. But I can't say the same thing about other teachers. I mean I take the time to say, I'm here in the morning, I'm here after school, and I give them as much time as I can."

*Literacy and Language.* ELL students may come to school with various academic abilities in their native language. They may be illiterate in their native language. They may have difficulty learning a new language at the high school level. Depending on the academic proficiency of their native language, the ELL student has a relatively short period of time to learn a new language. Students may not feel adequate enough to perform in the new language in such a short period of time. Moreover, students may have a stigma about speaking in English amongst peers due to feelings about inadequacy, peer perception, or ridicule. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Literacy/Language.

**“The better the student is able to read in his/her native language, the sooner, from my experience, the sooner the student will learn the second language.** Well to begin with, some of the students that we get here do not have the level of language that you need or the proficiency that they need to succeed and to be able to fit in to the system and just, you know, continue with their education. Well, they're in a comfort zone. That's what's comfortable to them and they've never....I don't think anybody has ever shown them how both languages will, well they can achieve more if they now both languages, but they see that knowing Spanish people make it in life, so they could be one of those, just knowing Spanish. You don't have to necessarily learn English to do well in life and they've seen that. So why are they going to try any other language? Here living on the border we are not Mexican, we're not almost American. We're something other. You know, something else. It's almost like a unique culture. A unique language here and if we try to try to apply English rules or Spanish rules we don't fit. We're something other. It's not that. People don't come in with being able to work with a language.

Working with Spanish and English, kind of doesn't give them a good foundation in either. So they're working with something other than English and Spanish. I find that they have a hard time, because they don't have a foundation acquiring English. Well, because it's a border town, they don't really see the need to speak English because there is Spanish all over the place. There's Spanish in the cafeteria, in the classrooms, and they're not used to speaking English. They see no need for it and they feel shy because other kids make fun of them or they feel that they're going to make fun of them. So



when it comes to learning, to the literacy, it's very difficult for them to acquire it because they don't practice. A lot of our students come in with a very low level.....a lot of our students come in with no schooling or very little schooling in Mexico in their first language. So when they get here they don't even have a first language that they can transfer into their second language. The literacy that the student brings into the study from whatever they're coming from. It definitely makes a difference on how fast the student will learn the language. The better the student is able to read in his/her native language, the sooner, from my experience, the sooner the student will learn the second language. But if the student's coming from a poor academic background and I'm talking about parents who don't consider education so important as working, because we have parents who would rather have their kids working than going to school. Then it is definitely very difficult for students to acquire this new language. It is important that the academic background is literacy.

It is essential to the student being able to learn the second language I feel. The vocabulary level of many of our students is not as developed as, I wouldn't say necessarily as previous years, but I see students with less and less good vocabulary skills. So for a student who did not begin in English, unless that student is highly motivated, they have not developed a very wide-ranging vocabulary. As a result, they tend to be either non-readers or they only read when they are forced to read. It is not something that they enjoy doing. It's not something that they would do a choice and unfortunately because they tend to not read very much, they don't get the kind of practice in vocabulary development that they need. A lot of these kids refuse to, but not refuse, but they would rather speak Spanish and because they would rather speak Spanish that means when you put a book that contains English language in their face, they don't want to read it. A lot of them don't want to read it and thus their literacy is affected. I have talked to their parents. I always talk to their parents and it's the same at home. As much as their parents try to put something in English in front of them or even try to get them to watch the news in English, these kids absolutely refuse. They refuse to watch anything in English. We do have an occasional two or three maybe a year. This year I had 15 students and 2 or 3 of the ESL really wanted to learn English and the others is like pulling teeth. But for the most part, they are very low. They are not at the level that we need them at and, of course, it makes it hard to bring them up. Everybody's development is different and, of course, language development does not occur over night. It is essential that they do spend an additional amount of time at home with trying to learn the language. I think that especially the students should be encouraged to read outside, to watch television in English, to mainly read, and this will always help them achieve the goal. They will be able to learn it, learn the language faster. So yeah, it is essential. I guess it has to be from both parts; the teacher and the student. They have to have a balance in the time they put in towards this goal, which would be in this case learning the language."

*Home/Community.* The home and community are the environments students are reared and have a great influence on them. This sets the foundation for an individual. People are products of their environment. Parents at home have much influence on their children. People in a community set the standards for that community. With those standards, the method of communication and surviving in this environment are embedded in what is valued by its constituents. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Home/Community.

**“We borrow of course from the Mexican culture, from the American culture, and again combining them to make their own, another unique culture, a border culture.** So, that is one of the things with our community. You know, it is less educated, of course, and of course that is what gets our students into that type, you know, they are not motivated to learn. They see the parents and that is where they want to be. Well, for a large majority of our students, their parents are not educated. So, this doesn't help when the students, you know, go to school. They come and the teachers and the administration and counselors are trying to help them, but some of them just don't have that kind of support from home. They don't see school as valuable. So one of the things that I think that we don't do as well as we should have in the community is reach more of our parents, more of the community on the value of the kids staying in school. I mean everyone knows that we want them to school and not drop out, but yet every year we have parents who just are letting their kids do whatever they want. What I have seen is that parents of the English language learners, they are obviously good parents. They want their kids to succeed and they want their kids to learn English so they can achieve that success here in the United States.

There is a mixed message in the community. We have certainly a huge number of parents who want their children to be successful and one of the ways to be successful is to be more conversant in English so that they can have more opportunities at jobs. But we do have some parents who don't see school as a valuable thing. If the students have problems with attendance or with their grades, we do have some parents who say that is basically our problem that they can't deal with it. And again part of that just has to do with the age. Once the student gets to a certain age, some of the parents still have an influence over them and some of the parents have basically given up. So they get a mixed message. Education has to be supported by the parents. If the parents don't emphasize the importance of school and education, the students

they won't learn as fast. They'll not focus so much in learning the language. I think it is, again, it is essential to have the support of the family, to have the want of the family. You know, have the family behind you telling you, this is the best the thing you can do, this is what you should be doing. It makes a big difference. If the family's not really interested or is not even aware of the importance, then the student won't realize it and won't focus so much on learning the language. You know, they don't.....also sometimes they come from single parent homes and there is no motivation at home. There is no even help or any type of, I guess, yeah help from their home life. I think those parents know that the opportunities that are offered to their child are going to come here in the U.S. and not in their home country and that's why they have their kids here in school. Okay, so I mean these are fantastic parents that try to work with us and they do try to work with us, but they see the same things we see and that is the child is in that comfort zone and doesn't want to get out of it. It's almost like a different culture. So this home community is in a way sheltered. Those that stay here perpetuate the culture. It goes on. It's almost like it's a safe place for those that live in between these two worlds to be, to be at; almost with its own values, its own beliefs, almost its own customs. We borrow of course from the Mexican culture, from the American culture, and again combining them to make their own, another unique culture, a border culture. You have to first of all motivate them to learn the language and get them used to it, because back to our community some, our community really doesn't push for the need for English. It is more of, anywhere you go you use the Spanish language. Well I guess it basically ties back to the literacy that it is difficult for them to see the need to speak English for the same reason.

They go home and the parents are speaking Spanish, for this case Spanish. They're going home to watch T.V. in Spanish and around the community also. I mean, if you go to a store and you ask a clerk something in English, they'll reply in Spanish. So it influences them, because like I said before, there's no need because everybody around here speaks Spanish. It's kind of difficult for a person, even like my husband, he's Anglo and he couldn't find a job because he didn't speak Spanish. So it's the opposite of what you would have in another city. If you speak Spanish and even if you don't speak English that well you can still find a job. It's kind of ironic that it is like, even if we are in the United States. Here in Eagle Pass anywhere you go, you better know how to speak Spanish and they see that. So, again, if all they see is Spanish then that's what they see as successful. We know that we're going to be able to communicate wherever we go here in this town. So we don't worry so much about learning the language or practicing the language or being correct about the speaking standard English or it doesn't matter because we can always get away with a little bit of Spanish and a little bit of English and everybody will understand. So the community is definitely affecting, at least in this area, how soon a student can learn the language completely. the support of the family is essential. The community is also essential. For example, in this area where very few people speak English entirely, only. Most of the community speaks

Spanish. So wherever we go, there will always be people who speak Spanish. So we don't even have to worry about practicing the language. We don't have to...so there's no pressure. There's no need, which is the most important part...the need to communicate."

*Resources (funding, programs, materials, and training).* Resources are the tools or methods that teachers rely on and that enhance a student's education. The manners in which resources are provided and allocated have a profound impact on the teacher's capability to teach concepts and the students ability to grasp those concepts, including language. Availability of resources facilitates teaching. However, resources are just a tool and do not necessarily result in a high performing educator. To optimize resources, educators must know how to best utilize them, in specific situations to best accomplish the desired effect or goal. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Resources.

**"My experience has been that resources are more readily available in the elementary program.** We also have labs, reading labs. They are available for the students and, of course, we use some of those resources here. We have computer labs where they can go in and learn, extend their vocabulary as far as English goes. In the classroom, resources, while they're not limited, that we have abundance of resources, those resources may not lend themselves to the lessons that we do though. You see, and so, we have to find other ways to get to these kids. I mean, resources are plenty and luckily we've, here at this school, we've been able to ask for something and get it. You know, it might take a little bit of time, maybe not use it that year, but use it in the coming year, but we are able to get what we ask for and so resources aren't limited, but we have to learn how to apply those resources though in the classroom, definitely. I barely got a map this year and I didn't even get to use it, because nobody would put it up for me. There's nowhere to put it up. I have one old globe that's I don't know how old and you know, so I don't see much money and like right now they gave us the department, some mobile labs, but there is no software to be able to use the labs effectively; so there's not much either training on that, how to use this lab for your subject. We use them basically just to get on the internet, which is I mean it's valuable, but I'd like it to go a little further and have more resources come our way that is more specific to the subject that we're teaching.

The elective courses, there's nothing. As far as, you know, what I use, you know, I go to their ESL teachers and their reading teachers and I get things from them to be able to work with them. I know one of the available resources, again, is ESL and, of course, there it is strictly the learning of a language and they team that class with a reading class. So, they do the language and they also do the reading. They have some resources available in the form of workbooks, worksheets, alternative. Most of our textbooks, the companies do provide alternative material in Spanish and I know that many of the teachers use it. I personally don't use a lot of it. What I do is I match up a student who is having difficulty with another student and let them work one-on-one, because what I want them to work in is English. I feel like at this age, because I deal with upper grade level high school students mostly, at this age if I have them use the Spanish, then that's what they feel most comfortable in and they'll use it. You know, they are geared into ESL classes to be able to...so that they can become proficient. I was given last year an opportunity to order materials that will help students with that and we do have some books. It's just that basic grammar skills and stuff like that.

If we ask for resources, the principal, he will do everything possible to find money to provide those to use, books and reading materials and stuff like that that go down to a lower level so that they can improve little by little, starting from 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 9<sup>th</sup> grade and so forth. A lot of the resources that are out there focus on students coming in already having a firm grip on a language. That has vocabulary usage. They understand some very basic things, but kids that don't come in with a firm grasp on any language are going to have trouble. They will be challenged and either they won't want to do it anymore and we just don't have the resources to reach that type of kid. If we don't see the problem, how are we going to deal with it, how are we going to put our resources where we need them if we don't recognize what the actual problem is? I think we are lacking in resources. First of all, most of that stems from the fact that we don't accept the fact that we're maybe unique and we have a unique situation with kids that come in and don't have a foundation in both Spanish or English and that will create a unique situation. Some of the resources that we have are like Spanish language things. Spanish language materials, written in Spanish, audio set in Spanish and then translated into English that sort of thing. But I found out with some of the ones I try to use those resources with, is they don't have the vocabulary to understand the Spanish. So I have a problem. They don't understand when I speak English and they don't understand the English materials and then when I present them with the Spanish material, they don't understand that either. So I mean I'm kind of stuck. Now what do I do. I kind of try to get down at their level, but that takes time. Time that I don't have. Trying to teach a classroom full of 28, 26 students. It's hard to come up with the time that I need to spend with that one student, especially since I don't have the materials to help me out or the training.

At least the training, some training telling us, well this is what you do with this kind of student. I don't think I've ever had that presented in a workshop or development or anything like that. Like training, where we could learn a little bit more on how to deal with the students, we don't have them. So the resources, they are I believe somewhat scarce. I don't know, maybe we're just not aware of them, which again I would say is another problem, if there are any resources. But I think that we could do more for these kids. We could try to find more resources for them. It would help. I mean we have ESL training before, where they teach us how, because we're English, they teach us how to teach metaphor to them. We are taught just literary elements, how to teach literary elements to....I have a mind block on to what the training is called. I don't remember what the training is called, but we do it every year and it goes on for a couple of days and it's basically what we do. We see how we can apply the literary elements at their level, because a lot of times if I say, like I told you, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink, most kids will understand. But our ELL kid has a hard time understanding that. But again they want to hear it in Spanish. I'm not gonna say it in Spanish. Right now what's available for our teachers (in the form of teacher training) we have what is called Sheltered English that way you can help your students in the classroom by using ESL strategies with in the classroom to help your students succeed. That's usually given to use once or twice a year. It is a refresher course and, of course, what new developments have come up, you know, as far as ESL strategies. Of course, some of our teachers are ESL endorsed. So we are able to use what resources we acquire through, you know, through the courses that we took. But right now what's available is the sheltered English. I've been teaching for many, many years. I don't want to say I've never had any training in ESL, because that's probably not true, but maybe only once. It's aimed primarily at the English teachers. If you're not an English teacher. I'm sure that we have teachers here who have never had any kind of training. When I was going through college and I went to school in outside of Texas, so I was never offered anything there. We have had very little offered to us. Again, because in the upper grades, they don't put that much emphasis on it. I am sure the lower grades get way more. We have had training, several trainings on ESL by Dr. Abrego, or something like that. We have training. It is not limited. Every year at least once a year, we've always had ESL training.

As far as what I know about funding is there is always been money for those programs, for the ESL programs and to purchase materials to help these students. There are also programs after school that they can attend. So, I mean, the funding is there, you know. In what amounts, I really couldn't tell you because I don't, you know, I don't deal with it. But I know there is funding available for them. Now next year when we go to the four campuses, we will be having ESL programs, but I notice from their schedule they're still only in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Once you get into 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, there are really virtually

no ESL program for you, unless the school district wants to set it up as a special resources. And the reason for that is, of course, in order to graduate they must pass the TAKS, which is only given in English and at some point if we don't make them try to succeed in an all-English classroom, then some of them will never acquire English. But the resources tend to be more heavily geared towards the younger ones. But since we get students at ages 17, 18, 19 coming in, it makes it very difficult. So the programs when they are implemented, they do work because you have groups of kids that they are going to do everything that they can to succeed. Right here at this campus, right now, it's just 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. So we don't have an ESL program, like an ESL class. Next year, we are going to go into four year campus and we will have those classes, but those kids that come in to become Juniors, to be Juniors, they're I guess cheated out of that opportunity to have, to be enrolled in a class where their basic needs in the language are met. Again, most of the funding goes to the lower level grades. I know that there's some funding available in one of the Title I programs, At Risk programs, but they tend not to be used towards ESL. That's not been my experience, not at the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> campus at least. My experience has been that resources are more readily available in the elementary program. As a student moves through K through 12, the resources available particularly in the upper secondary become less and less. For us it's been compounded by the fact at the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade campus we were not set up with any ESL program."

*Attitude.* The outlook of an individual is a key point. Teachers and students who are determined to overcome challenges may have a strong impact on success. The determination of an individual to connect with the available resources, environment, and teaching assistance will increase the likelihood of success. The attitude of an individual is developed through a variety of influences such as, parents, community, mentors, social status, geographic location, etc. A person's outlook is a strong motivator in guiding his or her thought processes and actions. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Attitude.

**"Why do I need to learn English? I think for the most part they're fantastic kids.** I mean, as people they are fantastic people. They are very respectful kids, but they have an attitude towards learning English and that is that they don't see it as necessary. Now we do have some students that go up north, the migrants that go work. Of course, their exposed to an all-English

type of system when they go up north and those students see the need for the English language and, of course, those students are able to succeed. It's the ones that are here for the most part locally that feel there's no need and, of course, they travel into Mexico almost on a daily basis and they find no need for the language and that's where we have to change their attitude into, if you go anywhere besides Eagle Pass, you will need the language in order to succeed and to, you know, communicate. Of course, that's where we come in as a school community and the use of the English language in the classroom.

Motivating them to use it and, of course, we have the students that want to talk to you in Spanish all the time and, of course, what I do is I don't answer them and tell them okay, tell me in English and that, you know, gets them used to using the language. Of course, once they leave the classroom, you know, they are back to Spanish. So to a certain extent their attitude is 'I don't need to.' The attitude of the person, again, it's essential to the learning. If the person wants to do it, has this motivation, they will do it. Many of the kids we see, they're very pessimistic or they have a very low self-esteem. Therefore, I don't know, sometimes I feel that they try to protect themselves by giving off this image of, I don't care, and a very negative attitude. They start taking a negative attitude towards school, towards progress, towards achievement. It's more like...I feel that sometimes to protect themselves from criticism or from failure, from actually the failure, that it is a possibility always for everybody. They'll deny their want to achieve it. So if they don't achieve it, it is okay because they didn't want it anyway. So the attitude makes a big difference.

The fear of failure sometimes overcomes the need and the want. Another attitude would be the positive one. They feel that, okay I'm going to make it and they try very, very hard. But primarily the attitude is negative, because they see themselves as failure. They see that no matter how hard they try, they will never be at the same level that they were when they were in Mexico. So it's kind of primarily negative on their part the majority of the time. The attitude is very difficult because they come in from Mexico, they come in from another country and they are used to succeeding over there and they're used to getting A's and they're used to getting B's without really struggling. Here they struggle, struggle, struggle, and they don't see an accomplishment. They don't see success. Because the first test they take, they end up with a 50, when in Mexico they would have gotten an easy 100, it affects them and it makes them, sometimes it makes them want to quit. It makes them lose hope. So sometimes they say, why even try if I'm not going to succeed. The students that I have that are acquiring English are exited out of that program. I try to use English all the time, all the time to try and get them to learn more of the English language. Sometimes it is difficult. I have to set them aside or have them come up to me and ask questions and they talk in Spanish.

I had one student that refused, absolutely just refused to speak English, any kind of English. And I had no idea how to deal with it. The student that just



will not speak English. She will write it, but she flat out told me, I do not speak English. I know how to speak English, but I will not. I refuse to do it. So, I mean, how would you deal with a student like that? So, you know, there is the motivation there and of course we have to do that part. We have to motivate them into, you know, learning the language and staying with it. Sometimes, also exposing them to, you know, programming that's on television that's, you know, in English and seeing, you know, what's out there that helps them too and just talking to them and motivating them that way.

Some of the students have, and unfortunately, have the attitude that, Why do I need to learn English? I can go anywhere in Eagle Pass and I don't need to use a word of English. There are too many students whose attitude about school is very negative. They do not see school as the pathway to a better life. They see school as the place where they have to be because either their parents say they have to be here or for a variety of reasons. So their attitude about school can be very, very negative. The students see the parents at the level that their at and that does not motivate them as much to, you know, to become more proficient in the language or to do better. I find that there's two kinds of English language learners; those that want to learn English and those usually tend to be the ones that are here, either first generation or second generation, being here in the United States, American. They tend to be more the ones eager and willing to learn, want to learn. They see the importance of learning in education. Others that have been here for generations, especially here around this community, they're the ones that kind of have the attitude, well this is my home, I don't need to know as much. My parents, or my family, has gotten by with very little, minimal education, and so I can do the same. And sometimes that attitude is carried on from generation to generation, almost a cycle of people that get stuck here. The people that get stuck here have that kind of attitude, well why do I need school, what good is it going to do me? I mean, I don't see myself getting out. So they keep that same attitude of they don't want to come to school. They miss school. They're parents sometimes encourage that. Sometimes they don't discourage it, more likely. Some of the parents that I have met have been like that, that well, if they don't come to school, well they don't want to come to school. I didn't finish school. He's going to probably end up working, so I don't push him to have to do school. However, Those students though who see the school as a means to college or to something better than their life with their family economic level or whatever, then their attitude is great because they want to work with the teachers, they want to work with other students, they want to do the best that they can. So to me their attitude has a lot to do with they actually see the school."

*Teaching Practices.* Teachers have many responsibilities and many of those are showcased by their teaching practices. Lesson plans and methods of delivery are vital parts of teaching students in a limited amount of time. Furthermore, teachers must be responsive to the needs of their students to help them overcome obstacles. Effective teaching practices means knowing what are your student's needs, available resources, and teacher strengths and weaknesses mesh to provide instruction. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Teaching Practices.

**“The way the teacher, not necessarily behaves, but the teaching methods or the teaching practices of the instructor will either make the student want to come to this teacher and ask for help and ask for guidance or will push the student away.** And it is important that the instructor, the teacher tries to make himself available to the student and offer help as much as possible so that this student won't feel, maybe, well not necessarily pushed away or ignored, but make this student feel comfortable with the teacher and not afraid of coming to this teacher and ask for help. I guess that goes with teacher personality and to try to help or make yourself available to the student so the student feels comfortable with you coming for help. As I already mentioned we do allow students to work with their peers, to work in groups.

A lot of the ESL students, particularly if they are identified as At Risk students, are given the opportunity to do modified work, along with the special ed. It's not just special ed students that get modified work. They can also, where they get shorter assignments or shorter tests so that they don't have to read quite as much. For example in my economics class where I have most of my ESL students, they are asked to do current events folders. So I find articles for them that are shorter for them to read, so that they don't have to. Because sometimes that...just the sheer volume of reading intimidates them and they quit doing it and I help them highlight the main ideas so that they just have to concentrate on the main ideas. So there are a number of things that can be done. It's just that, again, if you have so many of them it's kind of hard to deal with each one individually. Well, one of the things that I do is I work with them after school. I pull them in to work with them. You have to sometimes even refer to saying some words in Spanish so that they can grasp what you're saying. Even if its just one or two words in a whole sentence, so that they can understand what you're saying because if you don't, they have no clue. Just working with them and showing them that learning the language is important. I do a lot of reading with them and get them to read out loud and, of course, we do the sight words for those that are, you know, at a

low level. Try to bring them up and start with some type of reading program that is maybe at third leveler and try to bring them up. A lot of times it's, you know, listen to recordings of stories, have them record themselves so that they can hear themselves and, of course, that helps in learning the language and, you know, pronouncing it correctly. I found that's been successful for me. I don't know, you know, some of the other teachers may have other, you know, but those have worked for me. A lot of it will be one-on-one. I like sitting down, once I get the class started, right after a lecture or if that day I'm not lecturing, I sit one-on-one with them and I'm next to them. I have Spanish-English dictionaries in my class and they're free to use them if they need them, so that they can feel a little bit more independent also. So they don't feel that they have to rely only on me. So they can feel that even if they're on their own, they can still lean. But I give them a lot of my time. I guess, also in the teaching itself, I think it is important for the teacher to repeat. To always write down the words, whatever the teacher says, write it down. Sometimes the students laugh when the teacher says something and writes it down, but they don't understand that....For example, I will do it because I want them to see how the word is written down and I want them to hear it pronounced. They don't understand what's going on, but I think that is very important practices as a teacher to have the students learn. It's difficult because, like I said, at this level we have ESL students ELL learners in the same classroom as the native kids, the ones that have been here all the time. So we can't really focus too much on them. So what we have to do is do a lot of hand motions so that they can understand. Sometime even we are explaining something our voice has to be projected clearly. It is essential also in the learning process of the second language learners.

It is in the teacher, managing the time appropriately in the classroom. Like I said, for example, for me a good management of time would be giving instructions or giving the lessons and writing out the words. I am doing two things at the same time. I am making sure they hear it and I'm making sure they see it. It is very difficult when you have a classroom with kids that don't struggle to understand what you are saying. Basically, what I do is I make sure after I'm done explaining something, I make sure I address those kids and ask them to make sure that they're understanding what they have to. As far as singling them out, I don't do that. We can't do that and we can't explain in Spanish either. We do run into a problem when they expect me to speak to them in Spanish and I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to cue them. I'm not going to have any type of hint in Spanish. They have to understand what it is that I'm saying."

*Challenges and Accomplishments.* Challenges and accomplishments are the obstacles and victories that are shared or overcome by teachers and students. These

may stem, on many levels, from a number of reasons. They may also stem from inside or outside the school walls such as, home, parents, social and financial situations, developmental stage, gender, etc. Regardless of its origin, the ELL student must experience success to boost self-confidence. The following quotes illustrate some of the teachers' thought on the affinity of Challenges/Accomplishments.

**“That’s a big challenge and they don’t see how much they accomplish because they’re still measuring their success based on what other kids that have been here their entire lives.** I think the challenge is an internal challenge. You know, it’s whether or not they want to achieve in the English language. I think the challenge is theirs. I don’t think the challenge is the teacher’s, necessarily, because we are going to do what we have to do. We have to teach them English and so we are going to teach them English. Whether it’s at a slower pace, but we’re still going to teach them what we have to teach them. Now the challenge is really theirs and whether they face it or not and some of these kids do and they do well, but the majority of them don’t want to challenge that. They don’t find it necessary to learn the English language. So, I don’t know, I don’t think the challenge is ours, as teachers. The challenge is theirs, as students. Whether or not they want to learn it because I hate to use proverbs, but you can lead a horse to water, but can’t make it drink.

We do what we have to do. I am going to do what I have to do, but it’s going to be up to them ultimately. But the success of the system is when the students learn it, of course. But I am thinking more of a...I think that we’re trying to understand them more, which is something good. I remember 10 years ago, they were put in the corner and they were given busy work and they were, here, your exempt from this test, you don’t have to take it, you don’t have to take the state exam, you’re going to be exempt for I don’t know how many years, 3, 4, I don’t know. The state is pushing the community, the teachers, the system, the school to take them along. They are only given one year exemption for the state exam, which is good because that way teacher know, okay, this student is exempt this year, but next year we are going to be held accountable for him or her. So we better do our best to bring him along...to put him on level with the students. So to me that is definitely a success. It is a challenge when you get them in class. You have to work with them more than the other students, but you can work with them.

The challenges would be having to, even though this Spanish primarily spoken all over the place, they still have to take a test in English. They still have to, like in presentations in class, I mean even it’s an ESL class, they are

still required to speak English and to perform in English, which makes it difficult because they're not used to it and they still have to read instructions in English. They still have to answer in English and that's a main challenge that they face, that they have to participate in that way. Another big thing is that they come in as 16 year olds and they are supposed to learn in one year what a kid that has been here they're entire lives learn in 15 years, they have to learn it in one year. So that's a big challenge and they don't see how much they accomplish because they're still measuring their success based on what other kids that have been here their entire lives. So that's like a challenge that they have. So, I think that's where it is unfair that within two years they have to move out (ESL program) and go into the regular classroom. Challenges, again, one of those would be overcoming the fear that they have for failure of failure. Everybody has, I guess.

It is a big challenge. It is a challenge because they're in a new territory. They were pretty much taken out of the cocoon of their comfort zone and they are being pushed to learn this new language, whereas, they were fine. They already knew the language. They had a language. They had established themselves already in an environment and they were good at it. They knew the language and then they were pushed to this other environment where they have to learn it. They have to adjust and it is a challenge for them. The fear. A challenge is to be accepted by the people around them...the new people. The place where they are coming to. I believe it is not easy for them to adjust to all these changes. So it is always challenge to adjust the new environment and to have the people around them accept them and understand them, understand where they're coming from. I see it around me, colleagues sometimes criticizing the students for being lazy, for not trying, but they understand the fear behind the student, in the student. They are in a new place. They don't know anybody. They don't know the territory. I think that one of the challenges is that they don't find themselves in the educational system, in the institution of education. I see it as they early on, almost subconsciously; they have to make a decision. Are they going to accomplish something in education, if that's so then that means they have to acculturate, because after all the education is an American culture kind of education. If they feel that they don't want to do that. Well then they challenge it. They don't accept it. So they go the other way and they take on more of the Mexican culture, another culture, and it doesn't go with an education. So you see a lot, I see a lot of my students that have made that choice. I kind of picture them and see those that have acculturated, taken on the English language more successful generally. Those that don't, that kind of don't accept that culture, the education culture, the American culture, they tend to be the ones that don't want to do the work, that don't understand English as much. So you know there's challenges. Early on there's a challenge, which way are you going to go.

If the student is highly motivated and their purpose for continuing, particularly as a Junior or Senior, to get a high school degree, then I've noticed they tend to pick up their vocabulary much more easily. They are more willing to take on the challenge, but some students we have here either because they struggle with language development even in their native language whether it be Spanish or Kickapoo, to pick up English means that they have to overcome two barriers. In other words, they're not very literate in one and therefore it becomes much more difficult for them to become literate in the other. They get very easily frustrated by that and I find in part it's not only that maybe they don't have a lot of access to resources to help them because are campus is not set up, structured at the moment for ESL, but it's also because of their level of motivation. An accomplishment would be their dedication. Sometimes even if they have a hard time with the language, they study and study and study and read and read and read and eventually they'll pass the test. I have had students who pass the TAKS the first year here, like first year immigrants. They pass the test because they've worked so hard throughout the year and it's a challenge and it's successful because they set their minds to it and they don't see that it's up to them. If they really want to pass the test or graduate, they will do it, because it's in them."

### **Group Reality: System Relationships**

#### *Interview Protocol Part 2 (Theoretical)*

The second half of the interview protocol was the theoretical interview. The structured theoretical interview was designed to identify relationships between affinities. The theoretical interview was presented through an Affinity Relationship Table. Providing the respondents with the Interview ART allowed them to follow along when asked about each relationship. The table provided a quick reference of all of the possible relationships between affinities. Presented with a copy of the table, the respondents were asked if they believed there was a relationship between each affinity and to explain why they believed so. They were probed to provide their experiences with the relationship.

Each respondent was asked to determine the nature of the relationship between all possible pairs of affinities. For any two affinities A and B, there are only three possible relationships: either A directly influences B, or B directly influences A, or there is no direct influence between A and B. These rules for hypothesizing are summarized as follows:

For any 2 affinities A and B, either

$A \rightarrow B$  (A influences B)

$A \leftarrow B$  (B influences A)

$A \nleftrightarrow B$  (No relationship)

If, for example, a member determined that Affinity 2 influenced Affinity 1, a left arrow was placed between the pair. The member continued the theoretical coding until the form was complete. See Appendix F, Theoretical Interview protocol.

### *Transcripts and ACTs*

Once all of the interviews had been transcribed word for word, the researcher analyzed the text for theoretical codes that illustrated a relationship between two or more affinities. The researcher documented the reference for retrieval by recording the affinity number on the line of transcript that refers to the affinity, and by documenting the line numbers and affinity numbers in the Individual Interview Theoretical Code Table (TCT). Quotes relating to a specific affinity pair relationship were cut and pasted into the third column of the TCT, along with the line(s) of the transcript that were the source of the theoretical quote. Once all interviews had been coded, the data from the interviews was summarized to create a composite of the individuals' experience with the phenomenon. Theoretical data was transferred from each Individual Interview Theoretical Code Table to a Combined Interview

Theoretical Code Table. By combining all interviews into one table, the researcher created a database for the entire set of respondents containing all theoretical codes for all affinities pairs, with each code containing a link or a reference to the transcript and line numbers that produced the code.

The procedure outlined above was also used for combining theoretical data, with the exception that a count of each theoretical code be entered into the Combined Interview Theoretical Code Affinity Relationship Table. Because individual respondents may have defined relationships differently, and may have disagreed about the direction of a relationship, this table lists both directions for relationships. The researcher counted the number of respondents who identified the relationship in the same direction and placed the tally as the frequency. The same was done for all respondents who identified the relationship in the opposite direction. A separate Theoretical Code Frequency Table was created for the Orange Group (Table 18) and the White Group (Table 19). Below is the Theoretical Code Frequency Table for each focus group respectively.



*Orange Group Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table*

## Frequency Table

*White Group Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table*

WHITE GROUP COMBINED INTERVIEW

THEORETICAL CODE

FREQUENCY TABLE

Affinity pair relationship	Frequency		Affinity pair relationship	Frequency		Affinity pair relationship	Frequency
1 → 2	4		2 → 6	1		4 → 7	5
1 ← 2	2		2 ← 6	5		4 ← 7	1
1 → 3	2		2 → 7	5		4 → 8	4
1 ← 3	4		2 ← 7	1		4 ← 8	2
1 → 4	0		2 → 8	2		5 → 6	2
1 ← 4	6		2 ← 8	4		5 ← 6	4
1 → 5	4		3 → 4	0		5 → 7	4
1 ← 5	2		3 ← 4	6		5 ← 7	2
1 → 6	3		3 → 5	2		5 → 8	3
1 ← 6	3		3 ← 5	4		5 ← 8	3
1 → 7	6		3 → 6	0		6 → 7	4
1 ← 7	0		3 ← 6	6		6 ← 7	2
1 → 8	1		3 → 7	1		6 → 8	3
1 ← 8	4		3 ← 7	5		6 ← 8	3
2 → 3	3		3 → 8	4		7 → 8	4
2 ← 3	3		3 ← 8	2		7 ← 8	2
2 → 4	1		4 → 5	3			
2 ← 4	5		4 ← 5	3			
2 → 5	1		4 → 6	5			
2 ← 5	4		4 ← 6	1			

### Pareto Protocol

The results of the frequency tallies were transferred into the Pareto protocol tables. The Pareto protocol determined which affinity pair relationships would be used in the system. Tables 20 and 21 are the Pareto protocol tables. Table 20 is for the Orange Focus Group and Table 21 is for the White Focus Group.

Table 20  
Orange Group Pareto Table

Orange Group Pareto Table					
Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency Sorted (Descending)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (Relation)	Cumulative Percent (Frequency)	Power
1. 2 → 3	8	8	1.8	3.6	1.8
2. 3 ← 4	8	16	3.6	7.2	3.7
3. 4 → 6	8	24	5.4	10.9	5.5
4. 4 → 8	8	32	7.1	14.5	7.3
5. 1 ← 3	7	39	8.9	17.6	8.7
6. 1 ← 4	7	46	10.7	20.8	10.1
7. 2 ← 5	7	53	12.5	24.0	11.5
8. 3 ← 5	7	60	14.3	27.1	12.9
9. 3 ← 6	7	67	16.1	30.3	14.2
10. 1 ← 6	6	73	17.9	33.0	15.2
11. 1 → 7	6	79	19.6	35.7	16.1
12. 2 ← 4	6	85	21.4	38.5	17.0
13. 2 ← 6	6	91	23.2	41.2	18.0
14. 3 ← 7	6	97	25.0	43.9	18.9
15. 5 → 8	6	103	26.8	46.6	19.8
16. 6 → 8	6	109	28.6	49.3	20.7
17. 1 ← 2	5	114	30.4	51.6	21.2
18. 1 ← 5	5	119	32.1	53.8	21.7
19. 1 → 8	5	124	33.9	56.1	22.2
20. 2 ← 7	5	129	35.7	58.4	22.7
21. 2 → 8	5	134	37.5	60.6	23.1
22. 5 → 7	5	139	39.3	62.9	23.6
23. 6 → 7	5	144	41.1	65.2	24.1
24. 7 → 8	5	149	42.9	67.4	24.6
25. 3 → 8	4	153	44.6	69.2	24.6
26. 3 ← 8	4	157	46.4	71.0	24.6
27. 4 → 5	4	161	48.2	72.9	24.6
28. 4 ← 5	4	165	50.0	74.7	24.7
29. 4 → 7	4	169	51.8	76.5	24.7
30. 4 ← 7	4	173	53.6	78.3	24.7
31. 5 → 6	4	177	55.4	80.1	24.7
32. 1 → 2	3	180	57.1	81.4	24.3
33. 1 → 5	3	183	58.9	82.8	23.9
34. 1 ← 8	3	186	60.7	84.2	23.4
35. 2 → 7	3	189	62.5	85.5	23.0
36. 2 ← 8	3	192	64.3	86.9	22.6
37. 5 ← 7	3	195	66.1	88.2	22.2
38. 6 ← 7	3	198	67.9	89.6	21.7
39. 7 ← 8	3	201	69.6	91.0	21.3
40. 1 → 6	2	203	71.4	91.9	20.4
41. 1 ← 7	2	205	73.2	92.8	19.5
42. 2 → 4	2	207	75.0	93.7	18.7
43. 2 → 6	2	209	76.8	94.6	17.8
44. 3 → 7	2	211	78.6	95.5	16.9
45. 5 ← 6	2	213	80.4	96.4	16.0
46. 6 ← 8	2	215	82.1	97.3	15.1
47. 1 → 3	1	216	83.9	97.7	13.8
48. 1 → 4	1	217	85.7	98.2	12.5
49. 2 → 5	1	218	87.5	98.6	11.1
50. 3 → 5	1	219	89.3	99.1	9.8
51. 3 → 6	1	220	91.1	99.5	8.5
52. 5 ← 8	1	221	92.9	100.0	7.1
53. 2 ← 3	0	221	94.6	100.0	5.4
54. 3 → 4	0	221	96.4	100.0	3.6
55. 4 ← 6	0	221	98.2	100.0	1.8
56. 4 ← 8	0	221	100.0	100.0	0.0
<b>Total Frequency</b>	<b>221</b>	Equal Total Frequency	Equals 100%	Equals 100%	Power = E-D

Table 21  
White Group Pareto Table

White Group Pareto Table					
Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency Sorted (Descending)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (Relation)	Cumulative Percent (Frequency)	Power
3 ← 6	6	6	1.8	3.6	1.8
3 ← 4	6	12	3.6	7.2	3.7
1 → 7	6	18	5.4	10.8	5.5
1 ← 4	6	24	7.1	14.5	7.3
4 → 7	5	29	8.9	17.5	8.5
4 → 6	5	34	10.7	20.5	9.8
3 ← 7	5	39	12.5	23.5	11.0
2 → 7	5	44	14.3	26.5	12.2
2 ← 6	5	49	16.1	29.5	13.4
2 ← 4	5	54	17.9	32.5	14.7
7 → 8	4	58	19.6	34.9	15.3
6 → 7	4	62	21.4	37.3	15.9
5 → 7	4	66	23.2	39.8	16.5
5 ← 6	4	70	25.0	42.2	17.2
4 → 8	4	74	26.8	44.6	17.8
3 → 8	4	78	28.6	47.0	18.4
3 ← 5	4	82	30.4	49.4	19.0
2 ← 8	4	86	32.1	51.8	19.7
2 ← 5	4	90	33.9	54.2	20.3
1 → 5	4	94	35.7	56.6	20.9
1 → 2	4	98	37.5	59.0	21.5
1 ← 8	4	102	39.3	61.4	22.2
1 ← 3	4	106	41.1	63.9	22.8
6 → 8	3	109	42.9	65.7	22.8
6 ← 8	3	112	44.6	67.5	22.8
5 → 8	3	115	46.4	69.3	22.8
5 ← 8	3	118	48.2	71.1	22.9
4 → 5	3	121	50.0	72.9	22.9
4 ← 5	3	124	51.8	74.7	22.9
2 → 3	3	127	53.6	76.5	22.9
2 ← 3	3	130	55.4	78.3	23.0
1 → 6	3	133	57.1	80.1	23.0
1 ← 6	3	136	58.9	81.9	23.0
7 ← 8	2	138	60.7	83.1	22.4
6 ← 7	2	140	62.5	84.3	21.8
5 → 6	2	142	64.3	85.5	21.3
5 ← 7	2	144	66.1	86.7	20.7
4 ← 8	2	146	67.9	88.0	20.1
3 → 5	2	148	69.6	89.2	19.5
3 ← 8	2	150	71.4	90.4	18.9
2 → 8	2	152	73.2	91.6	18.4
1 → 3	2	154	75.0	92.8	17.8
1 ← 5	2	156	76.8	94.0	17.2
1 ← 2	2	158	78.6	95.2	16.6
4 ← 7	1	159	80.4	95.8	15.4
4 ← 6	1	160	82.1	96.4	14.2
3 → 7	1	161	83.9	97.0	13.1
2 → 6	1	162	85.7	97.6	11.9
2 → 5	1	163	87.5	98.2	10.7
2 → 4	1	164	89.3	98.8	9.5
2 ← 7	1	165	91.1	99.4	8.3
1 → 8	1	166	92.9	100.0	7.1
3 → 6	0	166	94.6	100.0	5.4
3 → 4	0	166	96.4	100.0	3.6
1 → 4	0	166	98.2	100.0	1.8
1 ← 7	0	166	100.0	100.0	0.0
<b>Total Frequency</b>	<b>166</b>	Equal Total Frequency	Equals 100%	Equals 100%	Power = E-D

### *The ART*

The ART summarizes the relationships used in the systems as indicated by the Pareto protocol. Table 22, below, shows the Orange Group ART where 31 affinity pairs were chosen to be included for the Orange Group system. Of these 31 relationships, 3 were considered ambiguous or in conflict. Assume that a group has written a number of hypotheses arguing that Affinity A influences Affinity B ( $A \rightarrow B$ ). Another set of hypotheses argues the opposite, that  $B \rightarrow A$ . When submitted to the Pareto chart, the argument is not resolved: the table contains hypotheses that argue for both directions, and both sets seem equally plausible. These conflicting relationships indicate that a feedback loop may be present and needs to be addressed later in the system. For this study, the researcher ignored the lowest frequency conflict and used the highest frequency affinity pair to build the system. Below, Table 22 shows the Orange Group ART with the conflicting relationships that were addressed once the system was built for the Orange Group.

Table 22  
*Orange Group Affinity Relationship Table*

ORANGE GROUP						
AFFINITY RELATIONSHIP TABLE						
AFFINITY PAIR				AFFINITY PAIR		
RELATIONSHIP				RELATIONSHIP		
1 ← 2				3 ← 6		
1 ← 3				3 ← 7		
1 ← 4				3 → 8		
1 ← 5				4 → 5		
1 ← 6				4 → 6		
1 → 7				4 → 7		
1 → 8				4 → 8		
2 → 3				5 → 6		
2 ← 4				5 → 7		
2 ← 5				5 → 8		
2 ← 6				6 → 7		
2 ← 7				6 → 8		
2 → 8				7 → 8		
3 ← 4						
3 ← 5						

<u>Conflicts are:</u>		
3	←	8
4	←	5
4	←	7

Table 23 shows the White Group ART where 33 affinity pairs were chosen to be included for the White Group system. Of these 33 relationships, 5 were considered ambiguous or in conflict. Assume that a group has written a number of hypotheses arguing that Affinity A influences Affinity B ( $A \rightarrow B$ ). Another set of hypotheses

argues the opposite, that  $B \rightarrow A$ . When submitted to the Pareto chart, the argument is not resolved: the table contains hypotheses that argue for both directions, and both sets seem equally plausible. These conflicting relationships are an indication a feedback loop may be present and needs to be addressed later in the system. The researcher ignored the lowest frequency conflict and used the highest frequency affinity pair to build the system. Below is the White Group ART with the conflicting relationships that were addressed once the system was built for the White Group.

Table 23  
*White Focus Group Affinity Relationship Table*

WHITE FOCUS GROUP		
AFFINITY RELATIONSHIP TABLE		
AFFINITY PAIR RELATIONSHIP		AFFINITY PAIR RELATIONSHIP
1 → 2		3 ← 6
1 ← 3		3 ← 7
1 ← 4		3 → 8
1 → 5		4 → 5
1 ← 6		4 → 6
1 → 7		4 → 7
1 ← 8		4 → 8
2 → 3		5 ← 6
2 ← 4		5 → 7
2 ← 5		5 ← 8
2 ← 6		6 → 7
2 → 7		6 → 8
2 ← 8		7 → 8
3 ← 4		
3 ← 5		

<u>Conflicts are:</u>					
1	→	6	5	→	8
2	←	3	6	←	8
4	←	5			

### *The Interrelationship Diagram (IRD)*

Creating an IRD is the first step in a general process called rationalizing the system. Output of the Pareto protocol is summarized in an IRD: a matrix containing all the perceived relationships in the system. The IRD displays arrows that show whether each affinity in a pair is a perceived cause or an effect, or if there is no relationship between the affinities in the pair. Placing arrows into the table creates the IRD, thereby showing the direction of the relationships. An arrow pointing from A to B ( $A \rightarrow B$ ) indicates that A is the cause or influencing affinity and that B is the effect or influenced affinity. Tables 24 and 25, below, show the Orange Group Composite Interview IRD and IRD sorted in order of delta.

Table 24

*Orange Group Tabular IRD*

Orange Group Tabular IRD											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	OUT	IN	Δ
1		←	←	←	←	←	↑	↑	2	5	-3
2	↑		↑	←	←	←	←	↑	3	4	-1
3	↑	←		←	←	←	←	↑	2	5	-3
4	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑	7	0	7
5	↑	↑	↑	←		↑	↑	↑	6	1	5
6	↑	↑	↑	←	←		↑	↑	5	2	3
7	←	↑	↑	←	←	←		↑	3	4	-1
8	←	←	←	←	←	←	←		0	7	-7



Table 25

*Orange Group Tabular IRD - Sorted in Descending Order of  $\Delta$*

Orange Group Tabular IRD – Sorted in Descending Order of $\Delta$											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
4	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑	7	0	7
5	↑	↑	↑	←		↑	↑	↑	6	1	5
6	↑	↑	↑	←	←		↑	↑	5	2	3
2	↑		↑	←	←	←	←	↑	3	4	-1
7	←	↑	↑	←	←	←		↑	3	4	-1
1		←	←	←	←	←	↑	↑	2	5	-3
3	↑	←		←	←	←	←	↑	2	5	-3
8	←	←	←	←	←	←	←		0	7	-7

The value of delta was used as a marker for the relative position of an affinity within the system. Affinities with a positive delta represented *relative drivers* or causes while those with negative deltas represented *relative effects* or outcomes. The Tentative SID Assignments Tables 26 and 27 represent the initial placement of affinities for the SID for the Orange Group. The order of the Tentative SID Assignments has been slightly altered from the above table because there were two different pairs with the same value of delta. Those two pairs were 2 (Time Management) and 7 (Teaching Practices). Both of these affinities had a delta change of -1. Table 26 reflects the affinity number 7 Teaching Practices above affinity number 2 Time Management because upon analyzing the above table affinity number 7 influences affinity number 2. The other two pairs were 1 (Assessment) and 3 (Literacy/Language). Both of these affinities had a delta change of -3. Table 27 reflects the affinity number 3 Literacy/Language above affinity number 1 Assessment

because upon analyzing the above table affinity number 3 influences affinity number 1.

Furthermore, Table 26 identifies the affinities by their assigned number while Table 27 identifies the position of driver or outcome by their assigned number. Both tables represent the exact same information regarding placement of affinity.

Table 26  
*Orange Group Tentative SID Assignments A*

<b>Orange Group Tentative SID Assignments</b>	
<b>4</b>	Home/Community
<b>5</b>	Resources
<b>6</b>	Attitude
<b>7</b>	Teaching Practices
<b>2</b>	Time Management
<b>3</b>	Literacy/Language
<b>1</b>	Assessment
<b>8</b>	Challenges/Accomplishments

Table 27  
*Orange Group Tentative SID Assignments B*

<b>Orange Group Tentative SID Assignments</b>	
<b>4</b>	Primary Driver
<b>5</b>	Secondary Driver
<b>6</b>	Secondary Driver
<b>7</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>2</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>3</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>1</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>8</b>	Primary Outcome

Below, Tables 28 and 29 show the White Group Composite Interview IRD and IRD sorted in order of delta. These tables were created using the same procedures utilized in the Orange Group's IRDs.

Table 28

*White Group Tabular IRD*

White Group Tabular IRD											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
1		↑	←	←	↑	←	↑	←	3	4	-1
2	←		↑	←	←	←	↑	←	2	5	-3
3	↑	←		←	←	←	←	↑	2	5	-3
4	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑	7	0	7
5	←	↑	↑	←		←	↑	←	3	4	-1
6	↑	↑	↑	←	↑		↑	↑	6	1	5
7	←	←	↑	←	←	←		↑	2	5	-3
8	↑	↑	←	←	↑	←	←		3	4	-1

Table 29

*White Group Tabular IRD - Sorted in Descending Order of  $\Delta$* 

White Group Tabular IRD – Sorted in Descending Order of $\Delta$											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
4	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑	7	0	7
6	↑	↑	↑	←	↑		↑	↑	6	1	5
1		↑	←	←	↑	←	↑	←	3	4	-1
5	←	↑	↑	←		←	↑	←	3	4	-1
8	↑	↑	←	←	↑	←	←		3	4	-1
2	←		↑	←	←	←	↑	←	2	5	-3
3	↑	←		←	←	←	←	↑	2	5	-3
7	←	←	↑	←	←	←		↑	2	5	-3

The value of delta was used as a marker for the relative position of an affinity within the system. Affinities with a positive delta are relative drivers or causes; those with negative deltas are relative effects or outcomes. The Tentative SID Assignments Table represents the initial placement of affinities for the SID. Tables 30 and 31 show the Tentative SID Assignments Tables for the White Group. The order of the Tentative SID Assignments has been slightly altered from the above table because there were two different sets of three affinities with the same value of delta. Those

two sets were 1 (Assessment), 5 (Resources), and 8 (Challenges/Accomplishments). All three of these affinities had a delta change of -1. Table 30 reflects the Affinity 8 (Challenges/Accomplishments) above Affinity 1 (Assessment) and Affinity 5 (Resources), because Tables 28 and 29 showed that Affinity 8 influenced Affinity 1 and Affinity 5. Moreover, Affinity 1 (Resources) was placed above Affinity 5 because Tables 28 and 29 revealed that Affinity 1 influenced Affinity 5. Hence, Affinity 5 was influenced by both Affinity 8 and Affinity 1, thus it was placed as the bottom of this particular set. The other set was 2 (Time Management), 3 (Literacy/Language), and 7 (Teaching Practices). All three of these affinities had a delta change of -3. Table 30 reflects Affinity 2 (Time Management) above Affinity 7 (Teaching Practices) and Affinity 3 (Literacy/Language) because upon analyzing the Table 30 Affinity 2 influenced Affinity 7 and Affinity 3. Moreover, Affinity 7 (Resources) was placed above Affinity 3 because according to the Table 29 Affinity 7 influences Affinity 3. Hence, Affinity 3 was influenced by Affinity 2 and Affinity 7, thus it was placed at the bottom of this particular set.

Furthermore, Table 30 identifies the affinities by their assigned number and Table 31 identifies the position of the driver or outcome by their assigned number. Both tables represent the exact same information.

Table 30

*White Group Tentative SID Assignments A*

<b>White Group Tentative SID Assignments</b>	
<b>4</b>	Home/Community
<b>6</b>	Attitude
<b>8</b>	Challenges/Accomplishments
<b>1</b>	Assessment
<b>5</b>	Resources
<b>2</b>	Time Management
<b>7</b>	Teaching Practices
<b>3</b>	Literacy/Language

Table 31

*White Group Tentative SID Assignments B*

<b>White Group Tentative SID Assignments</b>	
<b>4</b>	Primary Driver
<b>6</b>	Secondary Driver
<b>8</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>1</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>5</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>2</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>7</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>3</b>	Primary Outcome

### **System Influence Diagram (SID)**

The SID is a visual representation of an entire system of influences and outcomes, and was created by representing the information present in the IRD as a system of affinities and relationships among them. In developing the SID, all of the affinities were arranged according to the Tentative SID Assignment chart, and was efficiently created with flow chart or “mind mapping” software program, such as Inspiration. The researcher began by placing the affinities on the screen in rough order of topological zones: Primary Drivers to the left of the screen, and the Primary

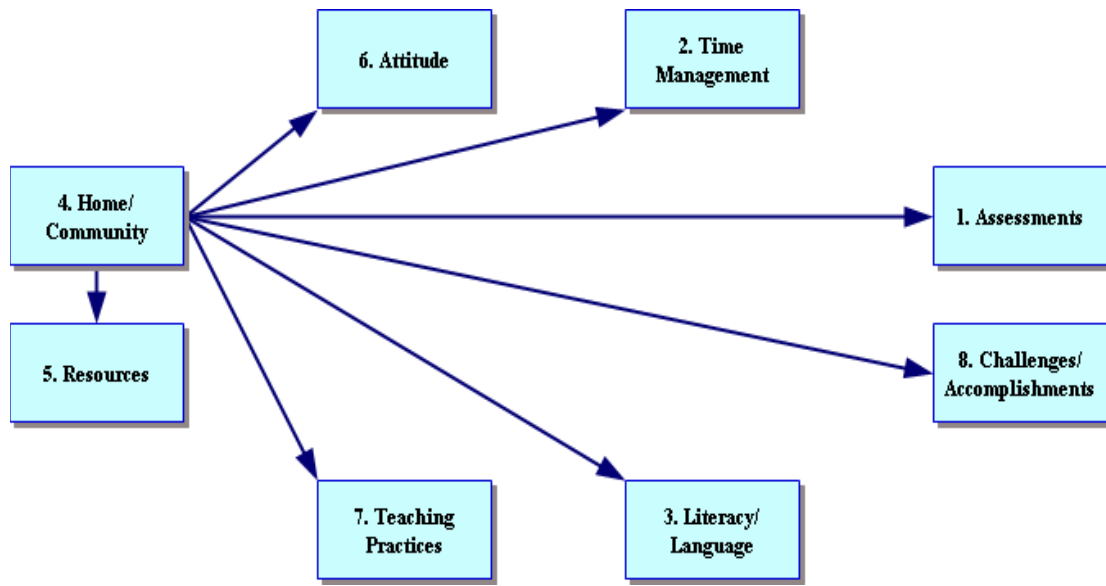
Outcomes to the right. Secondary Drivers and Secondary Outcomes were then placed between the primaries. Each affinity number or name was placed in a shape (an oval, circle or square). With arrows, the researcher drew connections between each affinity in the direction of the relationship as represented in the IRD.

### **Orange Focus Group Cluttered SIDs**

The first version of the SID contains each link present in the IRD and is referred to as Cluttered. The following discussion will build the Orange Focus Group cluttered SID link by link.

The researcher examined all quotes for each separate affinity pair relationship. Multiple quotes were then woven together to develop a composite quote. The following section is a composite description of the Orange Focus Group's theoretical codes based on quotes obtained from all the interviews.

*Home/Community.* The home and community are the environments students are reared and have a great influence on them. This sets the foundation for an individual. People are products of their environment. Parents at home have much influence on their children. People in a community set the standards for that community. With those standards, the method of communication and surviving in this environment are embedded in what is valued by its constituents.



*Figure 15.* Affinities influenced by Home/Community.

Home/Community influences resources as illustrated in the quotes below.

Home sets the standard. Home sets the pace. Whenever you are teaching, they don't experience things at home with the way you're trying to teach them. Especially in science it's really hard, like conceptual parts, because they don't talk about that at home. I don't see a lot of....I see a lot of community involvement when it comes to our talented athletes and our straight A students, but I don't see community involvement when it comes to our special need students, like lab students. I mean who is there to come in and help them. We don't have lawyers coming and volunteering to tutor and I know you find it in bigger cities.

I go back to thing of because we live on the border and we are strongly Hispanic here and like majority Hispanic. Of course, all the funding is going to go into the bilingual, the training for bilingual, and just like focusing on getting those learners up. A good example, pre-K: If you know too much English, you can't make it into pre-K. I have a problem with my kids, because they have to take some kind of test or something like that in order to go into pre-K or if you make over a certain amount of money, they're not allowed into pre-K. I don't know....They give them a test, I don't even know what the test is called, but if they answer the test completely right in English then they are disqualified for pre-K and can't go to school until kinder.

Home/Community influences attitude as illustrated in the quotes below.

I think that comes from mom and dad and the structure of the family itself and today I feel like that's probably not only here, everywhere that structure, the family structure itself has gone through some setbacks and we have a lot of kids and students and even adults that, you know, hey, it's just tough to deal with those kind of setbacks that we have in the family structure itself. That to me, is one of the #1 problem that we have with all of your young students and the problems that exist out there. It's not an easy thing to deal with and it's complicated and at the early age that a lot of these kids are, hey, it's a tough thing to handle when your family's not functioning well. One parent involvement, like encouraging the students to have a better attitude for school. Sometimes if your parents don't care and the community doesn't stress that you need to learn English, then the students don't care. It also depends on how they raised at home and what they are being told at home. That's the attitude they are bringing here to class. If your parents don't like it, the kids are going to not like it. I think comes really bad. And also you get the culture in there; the culture and the community. There are some things that they just don't believe in and it's hard to get them to understand it in school. What they see on T.V., what they sit down to watch, and what they sit down to discuss on the table, or what paper they read, has the influence on a kid.

I know parents care about education, so does the community. But maybe not to the level to where we would see that they are strict enough to have the student stay in school, complete a four-year program. It almost seems that, I want to say, at least 50% of the students feel that if they learn enough English and they don't accomplish their 4 year high school program, they can work in our local community and they feel comfortable with that and maybe because they see that this community is growing. The attitude would be to me how informed is the parent and the community of the challenges that we face on a daily basis with our students. The students reflect that attitude because sometimes they are over concerned or not concerned at all and I feel like who is talking to them at home, because I know that administration and counseling and teachers are constantly bombarding the student with why the need to learn, why the need to speak English, why the need to have their credits, or why they need to be in school and not be absent. You cannot ask a teenager to think the way adults think. You can't. So you cannot really tell me that they're making the mistakes that they make because they want to. I have had parents that are very, very, very excellent, excellent examples and the students their attitudes have a lot to do with it. The students go wrong and there's the way we are going to use it. It's not the parents. It's the student's choice. It's their attitude. They don't see a reason to succeed. Many times, because they have everything. They don't worry about succeeding themselves.



Home/Community influence Teaching Practices as illustrated in the quotes

below.

A lot of the teachers that we have here in Eagle Pass were born and raised in Eagle Pass and so their perspective on things is influenced by the community or how they grew up at home. A lot of people don't leave Eagle Pass. They come to the college here and get their education here at the college here and so all they know is Eagle Pass. So whenever they go into the classroom, they don't have the, for lack of words, the diversity of other cities coming in, like influencing them. They only have what they know from here, from their background here in Eagle Pass.

Just maybe in the way that teachers may not feel the support from parents and that kind of tends to, not necessarily create a negative atmosphere, not necessarily affect the way that you teach in the classroom, but you know that you can't count on that parent to be there for that student and so you are kind of left.....you know, there's not much that we can. I can't send extra work home and the parents are going to sit down with so and so or I can't send him to this after school or this night program that this non-profit organization has or you know, we don't have that.

I use formats that are probably structured because I know the community the way it is and the students the way they are and I try to approach it a certain way. There a probably is a reversal this going from the other way that may even be better than what I am trying to think of, but as I see the students come to me and as I know them, I use a certain type of format and I am open to, hey, anything that will work and changes that will make it move forward even better. So, you know, but I do my style or my approach because of the way I know the individuals that I am dealing with.

Home/Community influences Time Management as illustrated in the quotes

below.

I think that's very important. I think a family, as they teach time management I think it dresses a kid up for being a performer in any facet of life you want to face; whether it is school or a job after school or being accountable. I think that it's excellent. I mean, if your parents are procrastinators, it's going to rub off on you. Or if your parents are well organized, timely, it's going to rub off on you also. So if you see that your parents put a lot of effort into the studying, into certain things, I think it will rub off on the students. The amount of time the students are able to spend concentrating on their schoolwork, dedicated to school. If the parents have an attitude of school is not important, I can pull you out because we have a Quinceanera tomorrow and it's okay it's

okay if you miss the last three tests of your finals. It's going to be a definite influence on the time that students in school, on schoolwork, concentrating on what he has to do. Going back to the parents encouraging the students to maybe stay for extracurricular activities or extra tutoring work; that's the basis of their attitude when you walk into your classroom.

the legislators, it seems like what I just finished reading yesterday, want to make sure that we open schools until September because that gives more time to Six Flags to operate. They need to have all summer long and it's better if the kids, some kids want to work and make some money there. So some businesses have an influence on the legislators, so that will influence time management. So when do we start? Whenever we start we all know that we have to cover an x number of days, 185 or whatever it is now. But the community has a broader impact at the same level because they're the ones who actually decide when we start classes. And I think it's wrong, but anyway. I think it should be a local matter.

Home/Community influences Literacy/Language as illustrated in the quotes below.

If in the home there is no motivation for you to learn the language, it's going to be more difficult. I'm not saying it's impossible, but it's going to be more difficult. Because they don't have the language at home that affects how much they get to this kind of environment. The students speak first language at home, in the school grounds, even in the classroom. So how much encouragement do they get at home to use or practice their English is nonexistent. In the classroom, because of the need to accommodate the curriculum, we use first language as instruction and the student is expecting a lot of help in first language. At home, I am sure that they do listen to English programs, but they don't have that encouragement to use the second language or they don't have the opportunity to use the second language. So I would say that we are constantly using whatever limited language they pick up, whatever limited English they pick up within the 45 minutes of instruction and it is very limited in the first year. I see some of the students that have been here for two or three years that they feel more comfortable and at home, I know that they do get the encouragement from their parents. Even if the parents don't know English they do get the encouragement to listen to programs and those are the students that succeed because of their own effort. So home would influence literacy and language. Whether they have the kid something to read, be it in Spanish or in English has set the pace, sets the rhythm of the student. but for a lot of these students it does come from home because the parents don't read, they don't understand the English language so they don't read the English language, so the kids don't speak the English language at home. So whenever they come to school and they are asked to read in English or to comprehend in

English, they're totally off. I see a lot of these students, again, their first language that they speak at home, they in some cases it's pretty dominant and I think that affects performance of say the English language that they should be really working on because our assessments are in English and if our assessments were in their first language well, you know, it would be a different ballgame altogether, but everything is assessed in, the assessments are in English, and since that's the case I think that the home and community need to have that out there available for them. Go to any of our local stores. You will be spoken to first in Spanish and that gives the students a general attitude of, I don't know need English to survive in this world.

Home/Community influences Assessment as illustrated in the quotes below.

They have a difficult time with the materials because of their home background. Sometimes I do hear community members, or even parents, say why are we over testing? They don't feel that it is the right approach or to over test the students until they are ready. So I would say community would influence assessment. I think that involve parent involvement with staying on top of the students. Like asking the student, okay when is your next exam and the parents encouraging the student to study. if the parents don't put the emphasis at home the kids will not feel that it's important. As an example, the TAKS test. There are some kids that they try hard. They stay after school. They come in on Saturdays. They try everything they can, because they have that motivation at home and they know that if they don't it their parents are going to be upset and I mean I look at that as a motivation, even though it's not really a motivation. if an individual has a home life that I think you can go to any neighborhood and stuff and look at the neighborhood and see the home life that a certain group of children are getting versus another area of town or whatever and there is just a big difference there. Its kids that are receiving love and care and understanding and receiving knowledge about different things are certainly going to be more of a performer than the one that's not.

Home/Community influences Challenges/Accomplishments as illustrated in the quotes below.

More with parental involvement, parental attitudes; a student, or at least what I have seen, is the students who are accomplishing, who do become successful, and a master of English are the ones whose parents are behind them 100%. And the students who fail are the students who don't have that support. What they learn at home and what example is given at home will influence their accomplishments. Because if the student feels that they can succeed and they go home with this huge dream and try to change the parents way of thinking. Like some parents don't want their children to leave Eagle

Pass and you have the student that really wants to go out into the world and get and be challenged. But they're stopped with their home. So those are the ones we see here in Eagle Pass. On the other hand, we have wonderful parents out there home and community that are willing to help the student succeed in the real life, but if the student doesn't want to, they're never going anywhere. The value of the home and the family itself is such a, you know, it's such a motivator. If you have a good life home life that's strong, you know what, a kid that comes out of that environment, you know what, he can do anything. It's like yourself and myself, we had good homes and when we have good homes, you know what, you can go out and enjoy life and you are going to have ups and downs anywhere you go in what you're facing, but when you come from a good home life, I guarantee you, you know what, it makes choices much easier. Some of these people don't have that choice.

Families have dreams that their child will graduate, will continue on to higher education. The community offers some degree of influencing, it almost it seems like the community would benefit from the students graduating and the students accomplishing a second language, but the nonetheless I feel that some students might perceive it as everyone speaks Spanish, I don't have to learn English. So there is that influence from the community. Everyone uses Spanish in this community on the border, so the attitude is why learn English. If I don't make it, if I don't graduate, if I don't get out of 9th grade, I still have some place in this community to work.

I am looking at it as the challenges to graduate and accomplishment is you graduated. Again, if at home or in the community education is not a priority, well then they're not going to make it a priority here at school. That encouragement at home, it'll help them overcome challenges by asking for help or doing extra work. Because they don't know the language, they don't come with it from home and so therefore that is a challenge.

*Resources.* Resources are the tools or methods that teachers rely on and that enhance a student's education. The manners in which resources are provided and allocated have a profound impact on the teacher's capability to teach concepts and the students ability to grasp those concepts, including language. Availability of resources facilitates teaching. However, resources are just a tool and do not necessarily result in a high performing educator. To optimize resources, educators must know how to best utilize them, in specific situations to best accomplish the desired effect or goal.

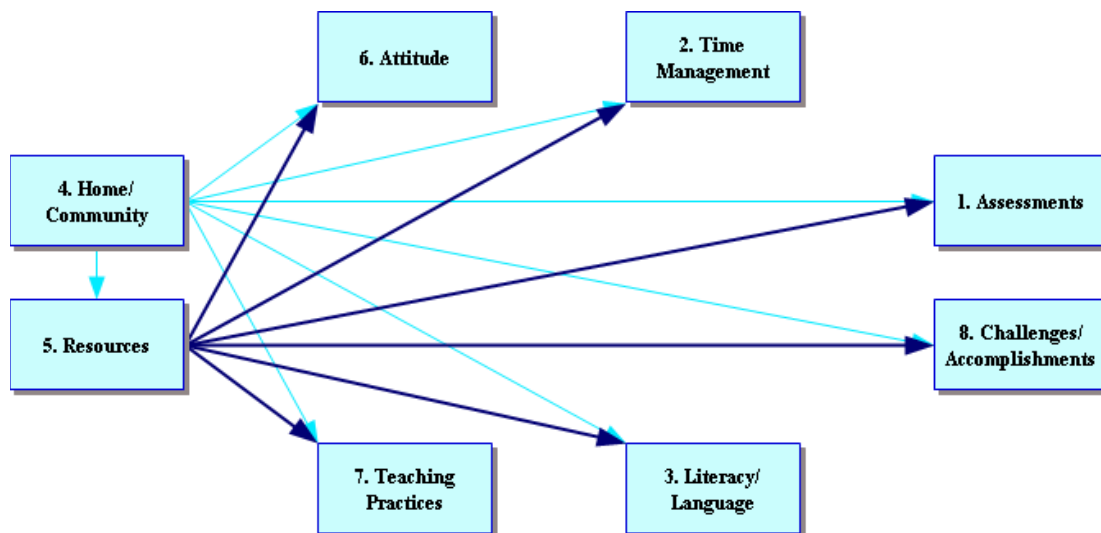


Figure 16. Affinities influenced by Resources.

Resources influence Attitude as illustrated by the following quotes.

I think the training that we get is what we kind of imply on them and that's what makes the difference.

If the students are given the resources. Let's say the programs right now, if a student doesn't pass some of them, not for everybody and they're not able to pass a course and yet we give them the resource and we challenge them and take the challenge we have the resource for them. Those are the ones we are helping out. Having different types of resources for the students, like for us to teach the students, they'll have a better attitude towards the work that they're doing.

I could see the students being given the opportunity to use technology in the classroom with supervision, materials that are decent-looking, materials that have not been abused. The presentation of materials has to give the student a sense of encouragement. When we have old used books, it seems like they don't consider them of value. The training that we get dictates how we need to prepare in order to help the student, but only for assessment, not necessarily for a lifetime of learning or appreciation of learning. It seems like we are being trained just to make sure that the student is able to be ready for the next test, not like what I consider like long term learning, just the next test.

Resources influence Teaching Practices as illustrated in the quotes below.

If the teacher has all the resources they need, they are going to have everything at their fingertips. It would make it so much easier for them. I mean resources could be just as simple as a copy machine, because we have times when our copy machines break down and how are we going to give the kids the work that we needed to give them, if we can't make copies. So I think funding and all of this stuff, it all affects it, if you put it in the perspective of the English language learner, you get teacher training to help these students to where, maybe.... I have never been through any to help the English language learner training or anything, but the way I would look at is, train the teacher not to be so bilingual in class, to help them with the English language more and that way they won't have a problem of translating, like in my case, where I feel that I translate too much for them. Because if you don't have that specific resource then you have to go with another thing, if you don't have the power point to be able to use or a projector to show the power point, then you have to go to another resource available. If you've got the resources you need, you are going to be able to challenge a lot of different areas that, hey, and have on-hands type of things that kids need to see and if you've got the on-hands things that they can see and play with and get to know and you know make it a personal thing with them, well you know that means something to them, but if you don't have it and you don't make it personal to them where they can actually just really kind of live the idea, the concept that your trying to get over to them, you know it's kind of hard then.

Training materials, stuff like that is what makes a difference in our teaching. You need training in order to know what to do in the classroom. Like I said, little gadgets here and there. Spanish-English dictionaries, that sort of stuff, it helps you. It supports what you are doing in the classroom.

Resources influence Time Management as illustrated in the quotes below.

I can say if you have the funding, if you have the programs, if you have the materials, if you have the training, either you can take longer and go more in-depth or you can pace yourself. I think with the resources you can plan adequately for the time management. If we're well trained, then that shouldn't be a problem. Resources when it comes to teacher's tool can aid with your time management. The less time you have to be running around making copies or anything like that, the more time you spend with your students. If you've got a lot of neat things you can expose a student to and most of them nowadays with the personalities that a lot of them have they are very eager to use their hands, their minds, their, hey, their eyes. And they get out there and with a lot of these new instruments and stuff that we have, hey, they're very eager to grab a hold of it and start using it right quick. So I think that, you know, a lot of these resources if you have them here well, hey, they pick up on using them right quick. I would consider that what monies are available for

the bilingual program or materials available would influence time management. We do have the support of technology, but not available at a comfortable setup to where all students have access to it. In the classroom we are limited to no more than one or two computers and in the library they are limited in time to use their resources or the technology that is available. Basically, I feel that we can do our best with what we have but we still need more. That could be like for the teacher because if you have, let's say you could do a power point and you could say for our class, but if you have it on a transparency you may use it and have to do it again.

Resources influence Literacy/Language as illustrated in the quotes below.

I will just say that because if you have the good materials, you'll...it's going to affect. If you have the training, the teacher has the proper training, it's going to affect the classroom and proper funding, everything like that. It is going to affect the classroom. I think if these individuals or even myself we had probably funds to deal with in our daily living and have newer resources around us that would expose us to new knowledge and different views and different ways to see things, you know, we would certainly be much more aggressive in moving forward with new ideas. If the kids don't have the resources and we can provide them with some, then they'll be able to do better. Better tools maybe in the classroom, better tools available to the students might help them find more success or make it easier for them to be able to grasp the English language. Each student is different, even though they're first language is not English. They could learn the English language through audios or through visuals, like with the teacher, or even through the internet. I consider literacy and language, it means the time for speaking, listening, reading, writing before they start into the academic of literature and grammar and because I have seen through my 30 years of experience of the programs that I have used to work for language acquisition the students had time to work in a resources room with the listening centers or computer centers to where they were working at their own pace, at their own level and they were feeling that they were accomplishing some language acquisition. Now with the literature part and the grammar part, it seems like they might pick up English from everywhere. I would say basically our monies and our materials are being reduced, limited.

Resources influence Assessment as illustrated in the quotes below.

Resources would include the availability of materials, monies for those materials, or even the preparation of teachers to be ready to assess students, either within the classroom or within a group of students outside of the classroom. Especially because if you have, once again, more materials, more programs that will make you stronger in the reading or grammar of course you

are going to do much better. Resources like that they update you. They put you on top of things. It is not always performing. It's performing smarter and so you have to have the resources there to maybe become smarter at what you are doing and do it a different way. Sometimes, you know, I know myself I have been in positions where maybe I'm a little behind time or over-the-hill, or if you want to say it like that, and you know, to think smarter and to be smarter you need these resources to come in and update you. resources we could say is technology, that is a resource right, so you would have different ways of teaching and then that would come to a different outcome because every student would be different from our....their visual learners, even if they're English language learners and they could also be more just written, just looking at the words. So it influences your teaching efforts. Maybe if we had the materials and the training, we could kind of put something together for them, so that that wouldn't be such a big barrier.

Resources influence Challenges/Accomplishments as illustrated in the quotes below.

We do have some challenges with the students that aren't able to get, that don't have the technology at home. They don't have...we don't have anything to lend them. We don't have anything to, here you can borrow this for a day, and their work suffers for it. Another teacher has that specific resource and the student likes it better, maybe that'll be a challenge for them to try to learn the material through a different resource. ....if you have these resources you're going to make a lot of things happen. A lot of what we accomplish is because of the resources that we obtain.

You want to go to Mexico where students cannot get an education. What can they do except be housewives? But our girls here can be professionals because we give them the resources. We give them the free lunches. We give them the free textbooks. We give them the free pencils. We literary give them anything that they need. So that would be a resource. Students probably receive more benefits, those that are limited in language, and those that are limited in learning skills. The resources that we have would be afternoon programs, which would be like tutorial programs. The monies, I know, are there, but how are they are used. Is it a program that can be used for the benefit of language or the benefit of testing or just as come and makeup some work so that you can get a passing grade, and sometimes I see that we are using it as a band-aid. The student was not able to do his work in the regular setup in the classroom, so send them to a after school program or a Saturday program and they will do some kind of work and they can get compensated with a passing grade. So sometimes I feel the resources limit the challenges. If the student is determined to accomplish an education, they should not be over dependent on somebody giving them a passing grade, because they went to a program or to



do a little extra work that is not necessarily related to the curriculum in the classroom.

*Attitude.* The outlook of an individual is a key point. Teachers and students who are determined to overcome challenges may have a strong impact on success. The determination of an individual to connect with the available resources, environment, and teaching assistance will increase the likelihood of success. The attitude of an individual is developed through a variety of influences such as, parents, community, mentors, social status, geographic location, etc. A person's outlook is a strong motivator in guiding his or her thought processes and actions.

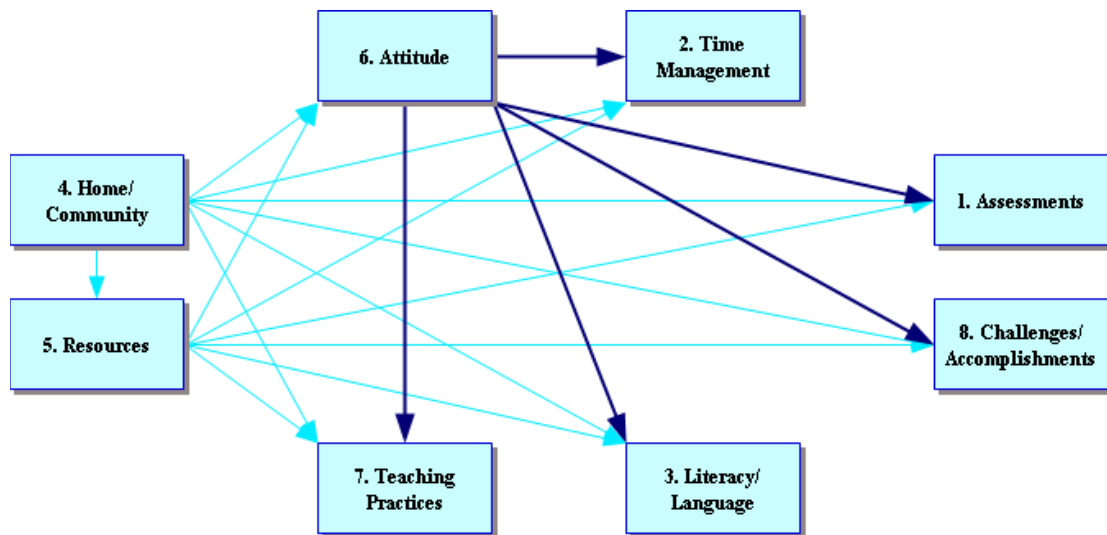


Figure 17. Affinities influenced by Attitude.

Attitude influences Teaching Practices as illustrated in the quotes below.

If you've got the good attitude, hey, you know what, I know I've seen individuals that just because of their attitude they can get out and have nothing almost as far as resources and because of their attitude they know how to

substitute and interact and just talk and just, you know, be dynamic. So I think attitude is just a milestone. I mean different teachers have different attitudes and different teachers have different teaching practices. You can see if the teacher's attitude is just to come and get their check, well they're not going to do a good job. It's just a job to them. They're not trying to help the students. They're just here for the money. And so, yes, I think attitude plays a major towards the teaching practices. How you feel about what you do with it. It's very important. It's going to influence what you do. You must love what you're doing in order to do a good job about it.

Student attitude really affect....You do have, and I hate to say it, but you do have those little group of students that sometimes they walk in and you know the first day of school, yo no voy hablar Ingles, yo soy Mexicano, usted no puede hacerme hablar Ingles. And it's just like uh-oh. That does kind of put little crimp in what you want to do, because you're trying get the student to open up, to get confident with English, to stand up and do presentations and if the student doesn't stand up and do presentations then it's a zero and you might, hopefully not a lot of teachers, but teachers might get a little bit lazy with that student, he's not going to do it, so I'm not going to bother.

Attitude influences Time Management as illustrated in the quotes below.

If they come in with a positive attitude then they're going to manage their time effectively. It's the students that determine if they want to do the schoolwork first and then go and hang out with their friends or it's their choice on how they're going to manage their time. Don't tell me you can't. Tell me you won't.

I see it mostly for teachers. A teacher that is a positive, collected, goes in there with a let's go, let's start it attitude is going to have a smoother running classroom, is going to be able to help more students, keep the students in control, and aid all the little subgroups we have in a class. If a teacher can't stand the student he is not going to spend time with him, no matter how much he's struggling. So I'm guessing if you have a bad attitude toward a student, you're not going to care as much towards them, as you would for a student that you do care for and you will try everything you can.

Attitude influences Literacy/Language as illustrated in the quotes below.

Attitudes and how they perceive education in the home is where it's going to drive everything else. They need to want to learn so that they grasp the knowledge. if they really want to learn it they're going to do their best to...they'll ask for a lot more help and if they're just trying to pass by and not learning the language they'll just do the work and that's it. They won't ask for help. if you give a student an assignment, they might say that they don't

understand it because they don't want to do it. Negative attitudes from the students aren't going to help them learn English.

The attitude to me is just something that's priceless. If you have got anyone with a good attitude I don't think there's anything they can't accomplish. I said this earlier that, hey, the attitude is going to determine your altitude. How high do you want to go? Hey, your attitude is going to determine that. I have the thinking of, how can I get the students to accomplish this task faster, give them the instruction in Spanish and do the assignment in English and let them use a dictionary, an English-Spanish dictionary. So my attitude is how quickly can I get them to accomplish an assignment. The attitude of the student is, I don't have to use English. Everyone will communicate with me in my own language. So we are always, like taking a step back instead of forward because we do use Spanish in my case to accommodate instruction.

Attitude influences Assessment as illustrated in the quotes below.

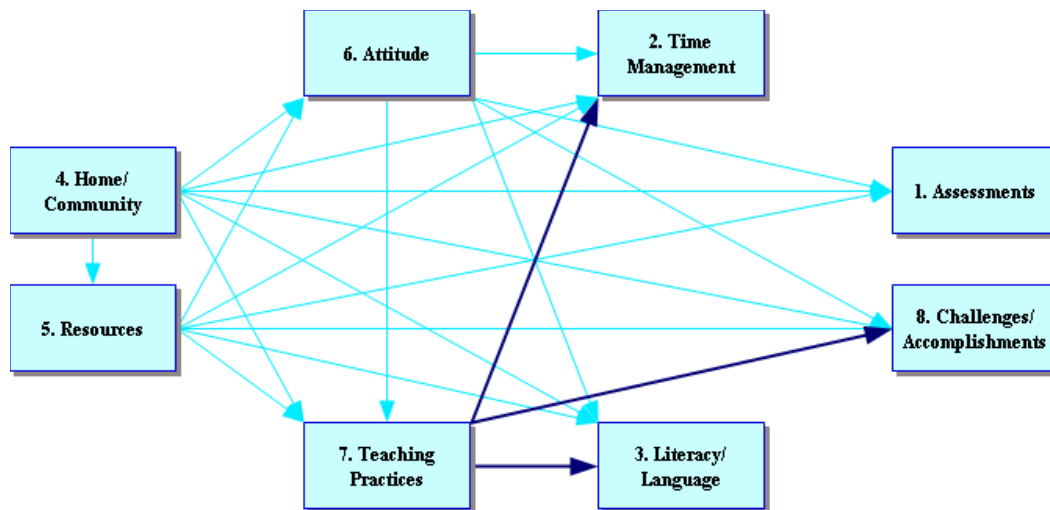
You have got to have attitude. You have got to have an attitude that I want to and, of course, a lot of these kids that we deal they have that attitude. It's good and we just got to....sometimes we drop the ball as trying to instruct them and take them forward in their studies. So I think attitude is a big thing. Any person that's got an excellent attitude is a....attitude is going to determine your altitude, how high you can go, and it's there. Some of these, like I tell you, come in with very good attitude, so the test itself or whatever it is that they're given is not that much of a problem because of the attitude that they walk in with. What does it prove? Does it prove that I'm not a good teacher? No. It just proves my attitude really mattered. Attitude, as far as teacher attitude, student attitude that all works into the way that you combat these tests. Walk into with a positive attitude, good feelings. The teacher support is there. The principal support is there. The school makes you feel like you are going to be successful; you're going to do it. However, on the other hand, you have once again, dark gray clouds; TAKS is coming in, rolling in. It's scary. It gets teachers stress out sometimes or cranky. Principals are cracking whips and everything. So it works both ways. How comfortable does the student feel at the beginning of the school year, if it's his first year or second or third year, how comfortable do they feel that they are prepared to take any kind of test? They sometimes feel inadequate preparation. Sometimes they feel that, I have just started my schooling here. I don't know enough English and here I am taking tests. They do get scared because they hear the word test in Spanish and they think that's going to be an obstacle to their goal of high school graduation. I have one student that, the family that we are doing recently, that he thought it was hard. So he didn't even try to practice. So, on the test he didn't do well, because he didn't practice this part. So his attitude that it was hard and not trying made him not pass the test.

Attitude influences Challenges/Accomplishments as illustrated in the quotes

below.

Attitude I say that it's going to determine your altitude. How high and how far and how life goes for you. You know, if you get up and get with it everyday and get excited about what your doing and you know what, it may not be what you like exactly, but you know what as you go along and your attitude's right, you know what, things will change for you and then you'll be in a position to maybe make a move into something is exactly what you want. Attitude is going to influence whatever you need, whatever accomplishments you might have. If they have a positive attitude, then they are going to overcome it any barrier right there. If you have a good attitude, you are going to be able to overcome anything that your try and I think that...if you have the winning attitude, I guess you could say. If you treat your students like they're not going to master English, they're not going to do it. It's even at this age. There are 16, 17, 18 years olds that I have in my class and they're kids. And if I say way to go or I put a sticker on their paper, you just see it in their face. It's like the 4th of July on their face. But if I just say one bad thing, that's it. I crush them.

*Teaching practices.* Teachers have many responsibilities and many of those are showcased by their teaching practices. Lesson plans and methods of delivery are vital parts of teaching students in a limited amount of time. Furthermore, teachers must be responsive to the needs of their students to help them overcome obstacles. Effective teaching practices means knowing what are your student's needs, available resources, and teacher strengths and weaknesses mesh to provide instruction.



*Figure 18. Affinities influenced by Teaching Practices*

Teaching Practices influences Time Management, as illustrated in the quotes below.

If a teacher is prepared, better time management. It depends on exactly how you set up your time and lesson plans and stuff like that to where it's not an issue. if you're well-prepared then you know that the students will understands the material better, other than not understanding and taking another day for the student, like finding another method to show them and taking another day for that student to learn that same concept from that one the day before. So try to be more strategic in the teacher. If you've got good teaching practices you're going to move forward with timetables and your timelines that you have to deal. You are going to get the material covered. You are going to have your kids in the position where they can move forward and be ready for the assessments that are coming. If you don't prepare for the whole, whatever it is 45 minutes or an hour and 30 minutes, you give an hour and 30 minutes. You don't stop at an hour. The kids can go. I have taught for 5 hours in a Saturday program and times go by when you're having fun.

Teaching Practices influences Literacy/Language as illustrated in the quotes below.

I am looking at it on a teacher's point of view here though. I feel like that the better job as a teacher, as we do a better job, is certainly going to be measurable with the student as he moves forward. It all depends on what you can do for them maybe. I feel that if you have a good teacher, the teacher will help you through that. So if the teacher is well trained and everything, I think

that will improve your literacy and language. in terms of my students, it's one of my teaching practices. They have to get used to the English language and if you kind of take it easy on them like, oh you don't know English so let me give you everything in Spanish. When is the student going to learn English? So I think it's a definite affect. We need to give it the importance that it merits, the English language. Because it depends on the teaching method of the teacher reaching out to the students that do not understand the language or the concept you are trying to make.

Teaching Practices influences Challenges/Accomplishments as illustrated in the quotes below.

Once again, we are the motivators of the kids and the role models as teachers. The teacher reinforcing a positive attitude to the students so they can do their work, encourage them to have success.

A well-taught lesson, a well-organized lesson, a prepared teacher having all these different strategies is going to definitely affect what your student accomplishment is. Not all students learn the same so you need to modify. And if you don't know how to, your students are going to fail.

If we do we are talking students here, if you do an excellent job I can't put...there's no value on any kid. He doesn't have to have money, but if he's taught well by a group of a teachers as he is growing up, you know, that really give him personal time and let him find himself and give him a background in math, English, science, social studies, the whole nine years that goes with an education, you know, he can go anywhere in this world and make good things happen to his life. I feel that if he's got a good background, you know what, college is easy for him. He will end up going to some type of field that is a real challenge for him and he feels comfortable with it and I think it's priceless at that point.

*Time management.* This affinity referred to several topics regarding time. In one sense it referred to the amount of time a student had been in the American educational system. Moreover, it referred to the amount of time between a student initiating their American educational career and the time constraints in which these students are expected to pass the TAKS test. It also referred to the amount of time the student and teacher have in class for instructional purposes. Furthermore, it

encompassed the amount of time an ELL may need to develop mastery in specific academic content area or skills.

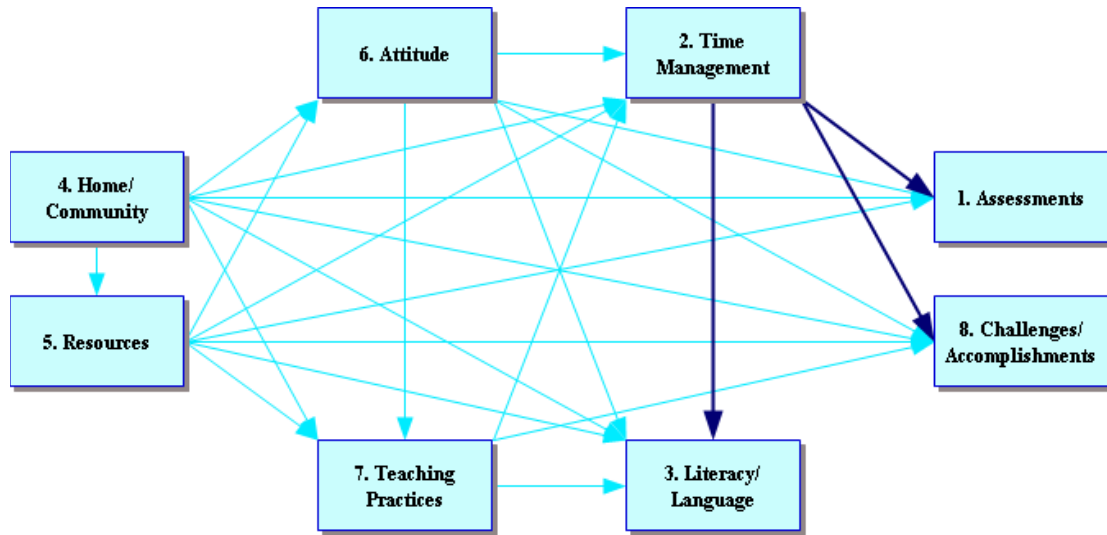


Figure 19. Affinities influenced by Time Management.

Time Management influences Literacy/Language as illustrated in the quotes below.

It depends how you manage your time or what you can kind of put together for them in the time that you have with them that will give them the results. You know, you only have so many days. You only have so many minutes in the period and it influences that. We have only so much time and we have to consider that for instance the interruptions in the classroom via the speaker, it also is part of the time management. That you need to move fast and you only got 50 minutes. if you don't take time to teach them the language how can they do well? It's time. Practice. Repetition. Everything is there. I think the more time you put into it, the better you are going to get. The more practice, the better you do. And so if the student, especially in like a English language learner student, if they want to learn the language and they put the time into it, you are going to see the results. If you had more time, I know, like I say I have talked about it already, we have a short fuse here. We have two years to get a lot of non-English speakers speaking and understanding the English language and that's not much time and, you know, if we had more time with those individuals, I think, you know, of course maybe a short fuse is good. I don't know. There's, you know, I have never had a whole lot of time with

these individuals. Usually it's real short, but I see some of the problems that some of these students that don't really have the attitude that they should, they get up to their senior year and still haven't mastered the TAKS yet and I know that if they had more time I think they would be a performer and sometimes they drop out and do something else because they feel real insecure with what they are doing. Time would be the necessary ingredient for any person learning the language. We cannot expect a student to start learning English, barely like a 1<sup>st</sup> grader or even at kinder level and expect them to be functioning within months, as a 9<sup>th</sup> grader or 10<sup>th</sup> grader. They are constantly referring to their first language as their basic form of comprehension. So, we are limited in time for them to have acquired enough language to feel independently successful, either first semester or second semester or first year or second year.

Time Management influences Assessment as illustrated in the quotes below.

You have to manage your time. if I am testing a particular subject. If I don't have time enough, time to cover it completely and I'm hurrying up on it and watering it down, then the assessment is not going to...I mean it's going to be reflected on the assessment. Furthermore, some parents only speak Spanish and everything like that, but since he never comes to school, the mom doesn't put the emphasis on attendance ass, because he has missed out. Especially in math....you miss one concept, you are going to miss the rest of the concepts. On the other hand, if they're prepared, because they've managed their time wisely, they might not have any problems once it comes down to assessment. Students know when they are going to have an exam, so they need to have time management to prepare themselves for that specific exam, whether it be in the classroom or state-mandated.

Time Management influences Challenges/Accomplishments as illustrated in the quotes below.

My thing on this is that assessment, you can't change it. So I don't think it can be influenced by very much, in my opinion. Now if I was at state where I made the tests, well then maybe, but at my level I don't think you can change the test in anything. So I'm thinking that everything that you compare with assessment or just not assessment results, but just the assessment itself is going to be like that. I have encountered some young students that, hey, they say give me the test. Let me see what I can do with it and, you know, I am proud to hear that type of challenge that's out there. They want to say, hey, give me that test. I will see what I can do with it. They are not scared of it. To see a young man or a young lady like that that's willing to, you know, just take that challenge on it's a real positive thing to me. Because I know a lot of



times through the years here a lot of kids, well even the background of some kids, you know, they are scared to take a test and scared to do this and scared to make a mistake. How well the students do within the classroom assessment or outside of the classroom assessment, like benchmark tests or state-mandated tests will encourage the students to stay in school. Sometimes they might feel, I am never going to be able to pass that test and they are referring to the TAKS. So I don't follow through physically. TAKS test, because if there's a lot of students that feel, especially in science, that that's a really challenge, that assessment, because some of them are really weak in science and they're trying their best, but they're still not passing it. Challenges are not having enough time to cover one topic.

*Literacy/Language.* ELL students may come to school with various academic abilities in their native language. They may be illiterate in their native language. They may have difficulty learning a new language at the high school level. Depending on the academic proficiency of their native language, the ELL student has a relatively short period of time to learn a new language. Students may not feel adequate enough to perform in the new language in such a short period of time. Moreover, students may have a stigma about speaking in English amongst peers due to feelings about inadequacy, peer perception, or ridicule.

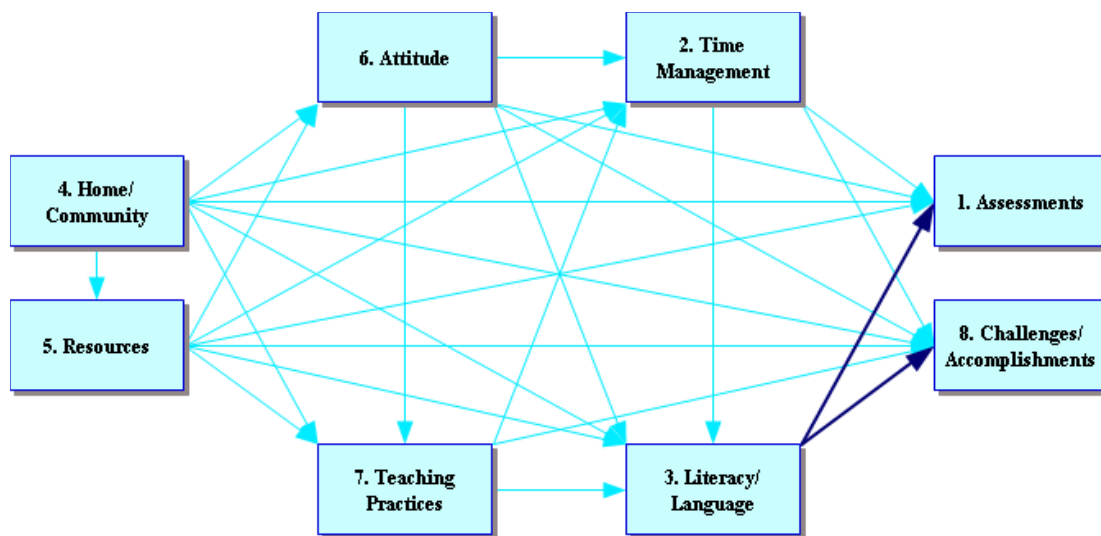


Figure 20. Affinities influenced by Literacy/Language.

Literacy/Language influences Assessment as illustrated in the quotes below.

The assessment will be in English, so if they have a poor understanding and the test is more independent where it's not like the classroom where you can help them out. So, I think it's a little bit harder because they have to know what every word means in order for them to do good on the exam. Their ability to read, comprehend English, their ability to communicate in English will affect their assessment results. Because if they knew the language, they wouldn't have such a difficult time once it came down to their assessment. you have to have the language to be able to produce, you know, the literacy that you need to have the understanding of what you are doing and so I think that you've got to know the language. You have to know the language. Because if you don't understand the question and you don't understand the language, of course you are not going to do well on the testing; it really depends on the level of reading comprehension of the ESL student or the limited English proficient student. That's how well they will do in any given test, whether it would be a teacher made test or a state-mandated test.

Literacy/Language influences Challenges/Accomplishments as illustrated in the quotes below.

Students that are not afraid to learn or that are not hesitant or shy to use the limited English they have will be the ones to feel that they are meeting the challenge of the language. Students that seem to be quiet, I don't say that they're not learning, but I do feel that they are holding back. They don't feel, I

am prepared to use my second language adequately in the classroom or outside the classroom. So I feel that literacy and language would influence how the student meets challenges. The students have to feel comfortable with the language in order for them to perform their work. So if the student feels that he does not understand at all, they'll give up on you. If you are able to defend yourself in the language, you can make an argument and make a stand and defend it without going wrong. Going back to that we're a border town, you will see that the people who have the stronger English background are doing better school than most of the students that have problems translating from the two languages or changing between the two languages. I am thinking challenges and accomplishments, as the challenges to graduate. Your accomplishment is you graduated. I think the literacy does have an affect on that.

*Assessment.* Assessment characterizes the exams and tests administered at all levels. It encompasses the gamut from state level standardized exams (TAKS) to teacher informal observations. These assessments are utilized to provide previous educational background and monitor ongoing academic progress. As a school, these results, disaggregated by population and subpopulations on the TAKS test, are public information. In Texas, these results play a large part in a school's and/or school district's rating. The ELL must be able to pass the TAKS within two years of entering the Texas educational system.

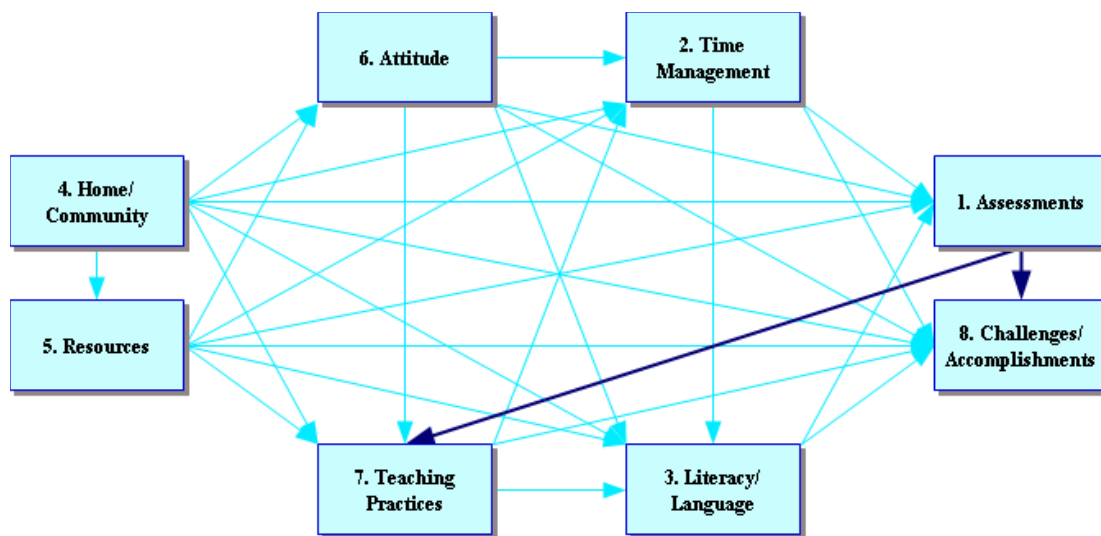


Figure 21. Affinities influenced by Assessment.

Assessment influences Teaching Practices as illustrated in the quotes below.

You have to have assessment. That's the way of life. I can't say that you don't have to have it. You have to have it. It's a way of measurement. It's a way of giving a kid a grade to move forward with. We've had it from day one. It's been there for years, and years, and years and if there was another way to do it, I think we would do it another way. But I don't know that there's another way to do it without saying, hey, you have an A, a B, a C, a D, or a F, you know. So you have to be able to assess something to move forward with. If the student is now where he should not be, you are going to change your format and do something else with him. You know, you are going to be looking at his performance and that's going to be through assessments and, hey, sometimes you have to try several situations before one works. You don't just sit on one. You move around see what will work and take that one, take a strong point, and move on and build from that. I am talking about like state assessments and the teaching practices. Like I said, the teachers have all geared to teaching the tests, instead of what's on the curriculum. You know, most of the teachers do go through the curriculum, but they don't cover as in depth as they used to do and I'm talking about math, as they used to do because they want to make sure that they can review the geometry for the test and stuff like that and I'm talking from Algebra II perspective. Because we have so much stuff that we have to do, but we are skipping over this, we are skipping over this, so that we can have time to go back and review geometry for these kids. How do I explain a term that students need to know? So my motive of teaching the concept is more geared toward the assessments....what the kids need to know for the assessment. So I need to cater to make sure that they pass the assessment. We are no longer at

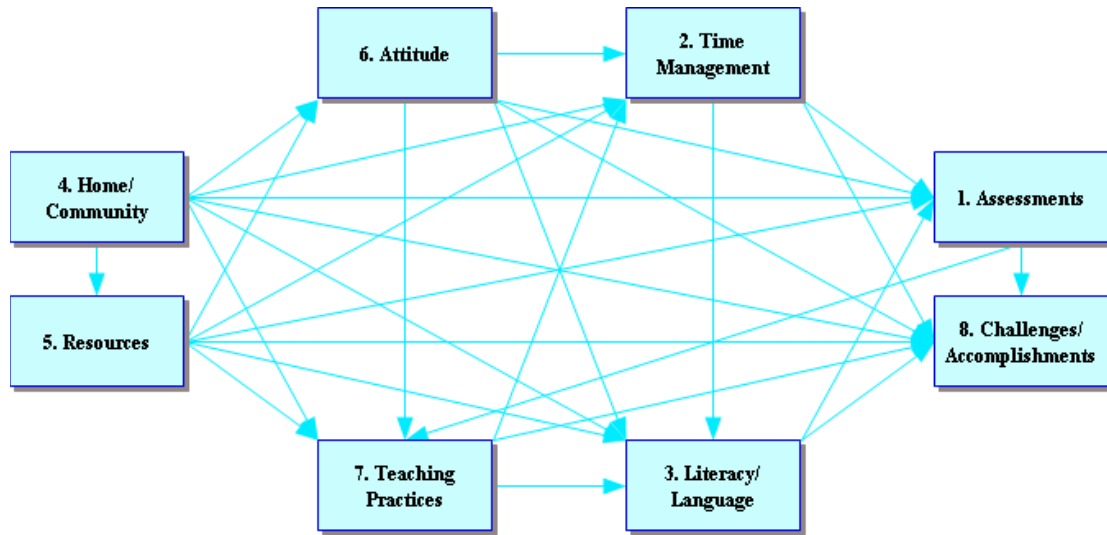
liberty to teach the curriculum as prescribed by the textbook or the teacher input of saying I would cover these items from my textbook and other supplemental materials. We have to always keep in my mind at any particular time we are going to stop reading a piece of literature and get the students mentally, emotionally ready for a test that they need to take, either a benchmark test or the state test or even the, like two weeks ago I had to stop everything and say okay students they want a post test on language, the LAS test. The students feel like another test and we have just finished testing in February. So we are, as a teacher, I feel that we are barely getting comfortable with the instruction, the curriculum and we say close the book. We are ready for a test. We need to concentrate on what the goal is and we're working towards it. Because when you assess the student you figure what went wrong and then you go back to that specific area where they got more questions wrong and try to change that teaching.

Assessment influences Challenges/Accomplishments as illustrated in the quotes below.

Because we just have to make sure that we follow, that we stick to what we need to do in the beginning of the school year. We sit down and we cover so much and you have to manage time your accordingly. Because if you are sitting there doing nothing, you're never going to get anywhere. With testing they know ahead of time when their test is. So it's their choice on how to manage their study time in order for them to become prepared. If you don't use your time wisely, it's just wasted time that's going by. If a student is in school and just messes around the whole time in school, well then they're never going to accomplish the ultimate goal of graduation. They're never going to accomplish passing this. They're never going to accomplish gaining the credit that they need and they also won't see the challenges. A student to me if he's on task, moving forward he's certainly going to accomplish a lot more than one that sits back and, hey, doesn't have his heart into it.

*Challenges/Accomplishments.* Challenges and accomplishments are the obstacles and victories that are shared or overcome by teachers and students. These may stem, on many levels, from a number of reasons. They may also stem from inside or outside the school walls such as, home, parents, social and financial

situations, developmental stage, gender, etc. Regardless of its origin, the ELL student must experience success to boost self-confidence.



*Figure 22.* Shows that Challenges/Accomplishments is influenced by all other affinities but does not influence any of them.

As the Orange Focus Group mind map was constructed link after link, the Challenges/Accomplishments affinity was influenced by every other affinity. Challenges/Accomplishments did not influence any other affinity on this mind map. According to the Orange Focus Group Tentative SID Assignments, the affinity of Challenges/Accomplishments is the primary outcome of their mind map.

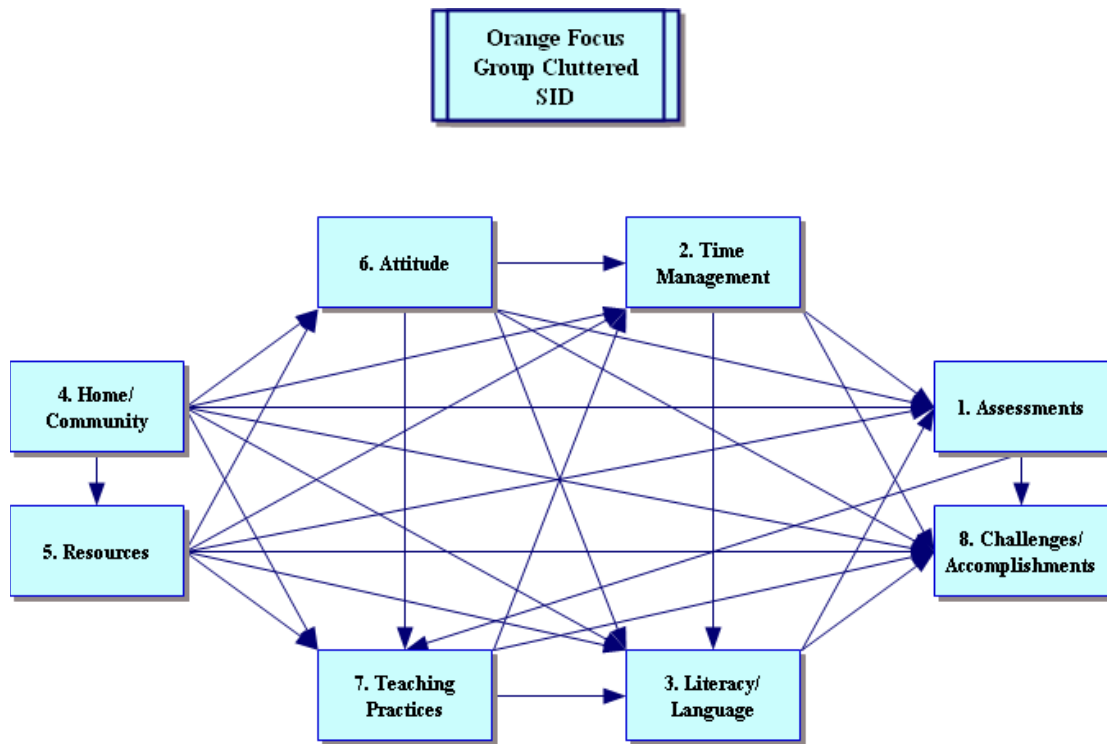
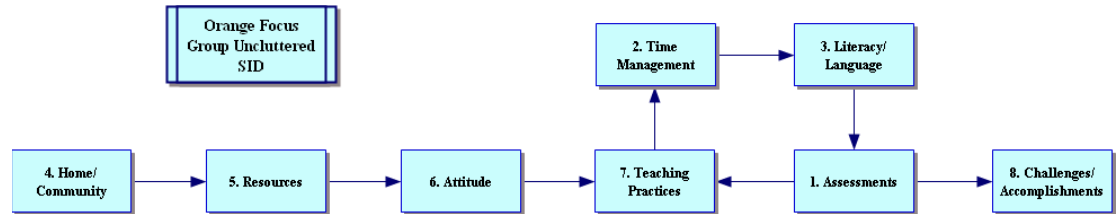


Figure 23. The Orange Focus Group Composite Interview Cluttered SID.

The cluttered SID contains all of the relationships described by the group. It is saturated with relationships. The problem with saturation is that a cluttered SID, while being comprehensive and rich, can be very difficult to interpret, even for a modest number of affinities that are highly interlocked or embedded within the system. In other words, many systems have so many links that the explanatory power of the system becomes bogged down in the details of the relationships. Comprehensiveness and richness are certainly objectives of the SID; on the other hand, so is parsimony. A way to reconcile the richness – parsimony dialectic is to produce a supplementary or secondary SID called the *Uncluttered* SID; one that has

redundant links removed. Figure 24, below, represents the Orange Group Uncluttered Composite SID.



*Figure 24.* The Orange Group Uncluttered Composite SID.

### **Pareto Reconciled SID**

Once the researcher had removed all redundant links creating the Uncluttered SID, the Pareto Protocol was examined for conflicting relationships. Conflicts occur when the same affinity pair has relationships in both directions and a significant frequency to include both in the system. The lesser frequency is temporally ignored in the IRD but is reconciled in the uncluttered SID. To account for the relationships, the system was examined to see if the conflicting relationship was indicated in the system, possibly, as part of a feedback loop. If such was the case, nothing needed to be done. Arrows were placed from Teaching Practices to Home/Community and Challenges/Accomplishments to Literacy/Language to account for conflicting relationships.



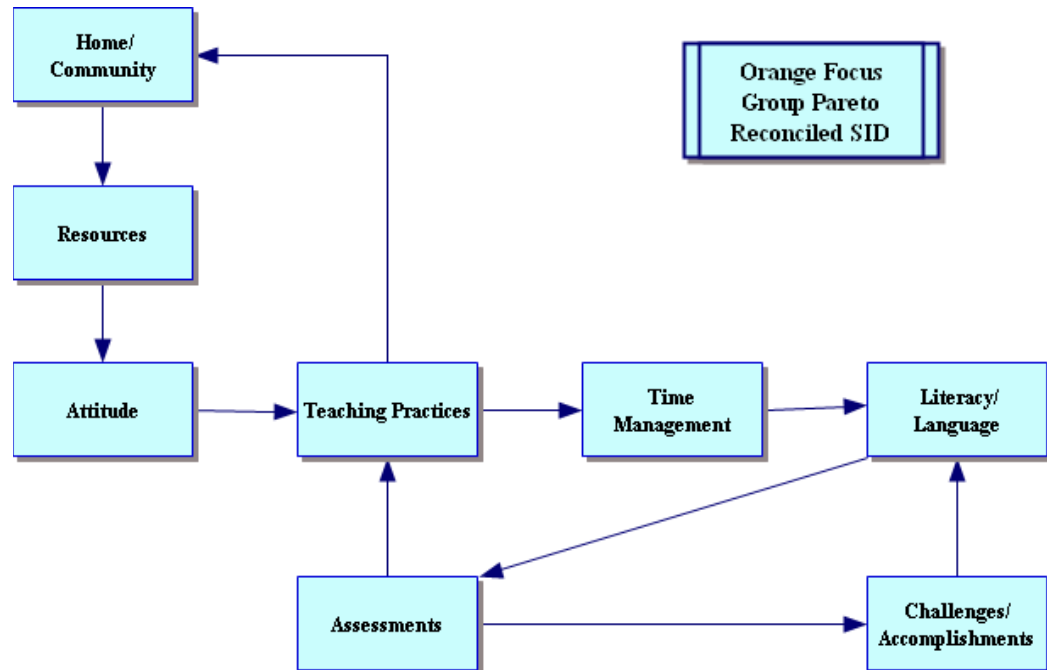


Figure 25. Orange Group Pareto Reconciled SID.

### Tour through the Orange Group System

The mind map of the Orange Focus Group teachers for the ELL in E.P.I.S.D. is a feedback loop that encompasses the entire system. The Home/Community influences the Resources and Attitude of its constituents. This included students, district employees, and all EPISD residents. The Teaching Practices were influenced by these three affinities but in turn Teaching Practices influenced the Home/Community that created a feedback loop within the larger feedback loop. This feedback loop was the driving force of their mind map. This loop seemed to be dominated by affinities that are primarily outside of the classroom and outside of the teacher's immediate control. Teaching Practices in this case may be interpreted as the processes or practices taught by a community in order for survival.

Another feedback loop within the overall feedback loop was composed of Teaching Practices, Time Management, Literacy and Language, Assessment, Literacy and Language, and Challenges and Accomplishments. These affinities occurred primarily inside the classroom or inside the teacher's immediate control. Within this feedback loop, Teaching Practices may be viewed as the practices a teacher employs for students to gain the academic concepts. This loop represents the outcome of the mind map. It's interesting to note that the affinity of Assessment is a pivotal point within this loop.

In essence, merging both of the feedback loops together identifies the direct and indirect influences on ELL students according to the Orange Focus Group's mind map. An argument that could be made according to this mind map is that the Home/Community creates and perpetuates the Challenges and Accomplishments of its students and constituents.

### **White Focus Group Cluttered SIDs**

The identical process was utilized to build the White Focus Group cluttered SID as to build the Orange Group Cluttered SID. The following discussion builds the White Focus Group cluttered SID link by link.

The researcher examined all quotes for each separate affinity pair relationship for the White Focus Group. Multiple quotes were woven together to develop a composite quote. The following section presents composite description of the White Focus Group's theoretical codes based on quotes obtained from all the interviews.

*Home/Community.* The home and community are the environments students are reared and have a great influence on them. This sets the foundation for an individual. People are products of their environment. Parents at home have much influence on their children. People in a community set the standards for that community. With those standards, the method of communication and surviving in this environment are embedded in what is valued by its constituents.

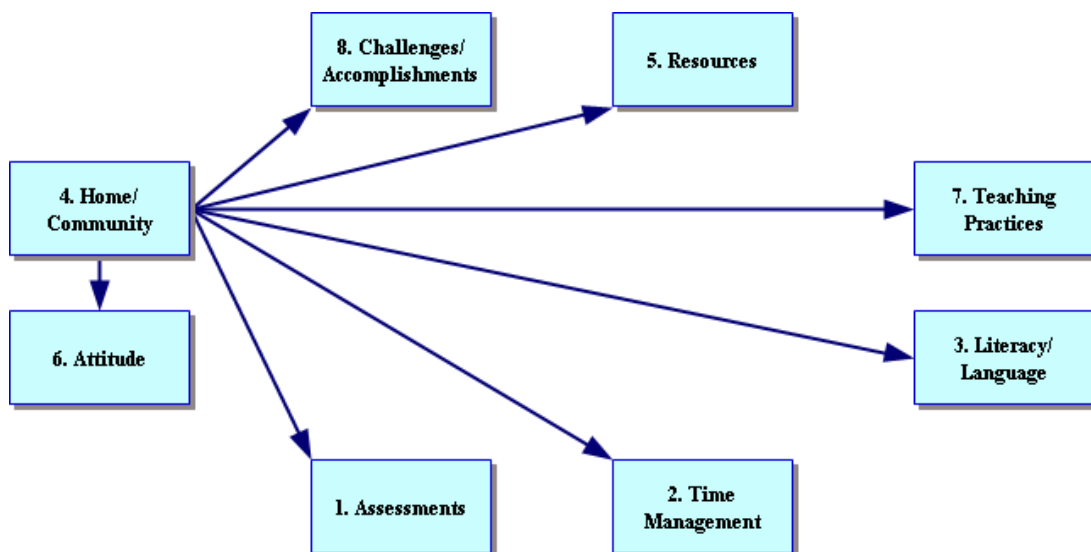


Figure 26. Affinities influenced by Home/Community.

Home/Community influences attitude as illustrated in the quotes below.

Whatever they see at home, whatever they see in the community, that's the attitude they will come in with. We go by what we see. We reflect our community. Parents have more influence on their children than they realize. Our students will be influenced because of the culture, because of the values and beliefs that will affect the attitude. If, let's say for example, there is no motivation at home for them to learn the English language and there is no need for you to learn it here to succeed in the community, of course, then your attitude changes.

Home/Community influences Challenges/Accomplishments as illustrated in the quotes below.

The way they see things, the way they value learning, the process of language, they're going to have more successes or they're going to have more challenges. If the child has support from the home, they will face the challenges. But that comes from home. His mom said, no, you're going to have to learn English and look what he's done. He's absolutely an amazing student. But again, he's got the attitude. He wants to.

Home/Community influences Assessment as illustrated in the quotes below.

I think if our students our taught certain things at home, certain things in the community, or the see certain things in the community that would influence them to doing better. Back to what I had told you before, if all they see is Spanish, and Spanish, and Spanish in the community and at home, then obviously that's going to influence their assessment and the way they take exams. At home sometimes the parents are not well informed, as far as testing. There's no, I guess, we go a little back to motivation. There is no motivation there for the testing and when it comes to them taking the test or taking a test, the performance is not there because of the home, the community. You talk to the parents and then you realize okay this why the student thinks the way they do. They definitely, parents, community, it's like....there's a lack of drive....like, whatever you do you do. It's, oh you failed, you failed. They don't instill a sense of pride in doing well or trying your best. Not necessarily doing well, but just trying. For them, sometimes I feel that the community helps these kids or shapes these kids to be this way, to not care about school; to not, sometimes I feel that there are no values instilled in them. They don't value education, they don't value family or they don't value themselves. So because of that, we get these kids that they come and take a test, they fail, they don't care. If there is no basis in language, if there's no value placed on education, well they're not going to perform well.

The fact that they're not exposed to communicating and listening so much to language in the long run when it comes time to be assessed. Whether they are given support of the importance of the assessment or whether they don't think its important can influence the kid's attitude.

Home/Community influences Resources as illustrated in the quotes below.

If there was a call for more resources, I think, from the home, from the community, there would be a response. at what level these students are coming to you and what you need to get them up to let's say, I guess, you could call it a literate level or a functional level. Whatever language they use

at home, whatever language they see in the community, well then we have to apply the resources to that set language.

Home/Community influences Time Management as illustrated in the quotes below.

It is the home that determines whether or not the child is going to spend time studying or working or just running around with their friends. What we are taught at home, what we see, is how we perform usually. What we see is what we do, a lot of times. Whatever the students see at home, they are going to bring into the classroom. Whatever they see in the community, they're going to bring into the classroom and I have to make sure that I manage my time around what they know already so I can get them into a high level of where there at.

The fact that they don't have enough time and the time that they get outside of school, it's not used learning more English. It's used they keep hearing Spanish and watching T.V. in Spanish, listening to the radio in Spanish and it's...time runs out and they don't use it.

The motivation at home is not there. So you have to adjust to where the students how much you have to work with them and teach them to work at a certain pace to get caught up and, of course, that is affected by home.

Home/Community influences Teaching Practices as illustrated in the quotes below.

Because as the teacher you're trying to break that. You're trying to give them confidence. You're trying to forget everything negative that they've learned or trying to give them more confidence in speaking the language. Depending on what the student comes to you with and what needs the student has. That is where you, you know, you work strategies to try to deal with what you have with the type of student that you get. Because we're going to teach the student they way they've already been sent to us, what they already have seen in the community and at home. So we have to definitely adjust to that. our students represent the community. What we get is what the parents of these kids taught them. You know, what they lived. So in a classroom they're just a little piece of that community and the way they act, the way they behave, the way the students behave in the classroom, the way they see education is going to definitely affect they way they teach. Again, you have to, the values coming from the home and community will affect teachers and how they teach, of what they hold important, and what they hold not important.

Home/Community influences Literacy/Language as illustrated in the quotes below.

The values and the beliefs of the community will affect their values will affect their education, how important it is to learn the language, how important it is to read. Whatever the student sees in the home, whatever the student sees in the community, they're going to bring it into the classroom and if all they see is Spanish, well then when they come into the classroom, they're going to expect that too. They spend so much time around Spanish, reading, speaking, and listening that they don't practice their English enough. There is no real need for the learning of English in order to live in the community. So there is no motivation coming from the home or the community to, you know, to become successful and learn, you know, the language.

Although, sometimes it's not the home. Sometimes the individual kid, but if the home encourages students to read, encourages students to work at their school, then that goes a long ways towards helping that kid acquire new language. if it is instilled and used since you were a kid, how important education is, then if you see it around you, then of course you're going to move in that direction, but if you don't see it around you then you're not and your literacy will definitely be affected by it.

*Attitude.* The outlook of an individual is a key point. Teachers and students who are determined to overcome challenges may have a strong impact on success. The determination of an individual to connect with the available resources, environment, and teaching assistance will increase the likelihood of success. The attitude of an individual is developed through a variety of influences such as, parents, community, mentors, social status, geographic location, etc. A person's outlook is a strong motivator in guiding his or her thought processes and actions.

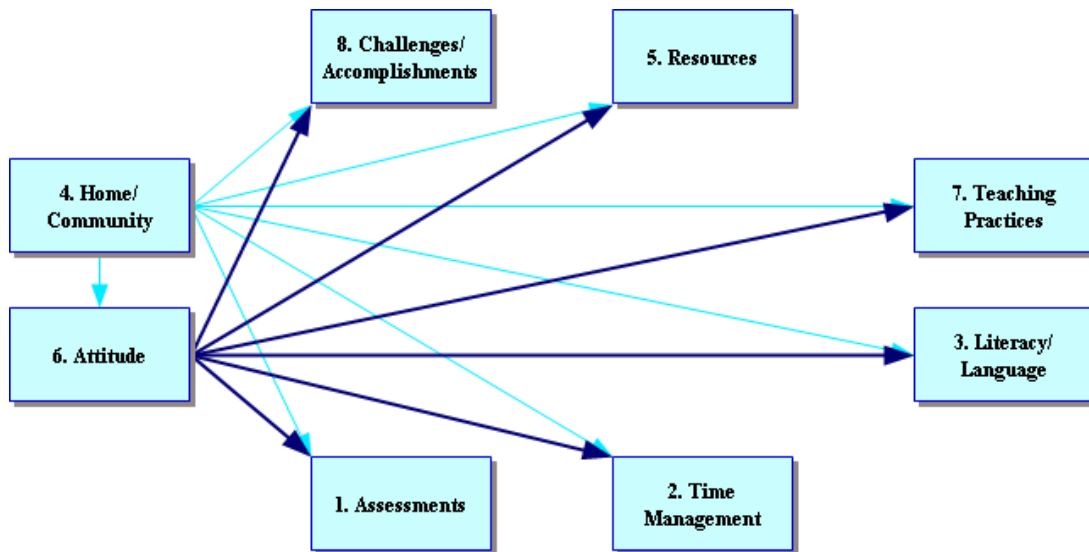


Figure 27. Affinities influence Attitude

Attitude influences Challenges/Accomplishments as illustrated in the quotes below.

The better the attitude, the more challenges you're going to accept and the more you're going to accomplish. A positive attitude then, of course, your accomplishments are going to be much greater and less challenges, of course. Of course, the challenge is right there with the attitude. You have to work with the attitude and try to, you know, at least change, you know, change it to a certain extent so the student can see some success and be able to, you know, to become successful. It's all in do you want to do it and you wanting to overcome this challenge, you will do it.

Attitude influences Assessment as illustrated in the quotes below.

The fact that there is a very negative attitude towards testing, since we have so much of it, they don't care. There is no, you know, definitely, they just don't care about testing. It's something that's put off. It is something negative because no matter what, again, they're going to have to take that exam. The attitude they go in with into the exam is going to determine how well they do on that exam. It's do you want to do it or you don't. You want it or you don't.

Attitude influences Resources as illustrated in the quotes below.

The kind of attitude we hold will affect where the money goes. Depending on what you are going to need to have available for the students to change their attitude into a positive one and, you know, to be able to learn the language. We have to adjust to the attitude of the student and so we're going to use the proper resources for that student. I am talking about the school, the way the money is allocated in school. The way it is distributed. The way how much money is spent on the students. It depends on the attitude of the people who have the power to decide where the money goes. The same goes for the officials in government. It is their attitude, it is how they view things is going to determine how they can allocate this money.

Attitude influences Time Management as illustrated in the quotes below.

If we want to do it, if we feel the drive for it, we are going to do it and we're going to find time for it. If we don't want to do, we'll just make up a bunch of excuses and we'll never get to it. If a student wants to learn, then we're going to be doing things a little bit faster. But if a student is hesitant to learn, then it's going to take us a little bit longer to get lessons across to them. Whatever attitude you have will affect how you spend your time. If you think it's beneficial, it will be valuable time. You will spend valuable time on something. If you feel the training or I mean the drilling is not going to do much good, well you tend to waste time. It becomes ineffective time.

We have students pass their test or graduate the year they come in. So if the attitude is positive they can accomplish whatever they want. If a student comes in with a negative attitude, you have to deal with that first in order to gear them into to learn the lesson and to....so that takes time, it affects the time.

Attitude influences Teaching Practices as illustrated in the quotes below.

In this case, the attitude of the teacher. If teachers see a student as ELL and thinks okay, well because this student is lacking the language he is going to fail my class. You don't give him the time or even the benefit of the doubt. You don't help, it's going to affect them. But if you the type of teacher, who is like, you see the challenge and take on it, and you do whatever it takes to help the student, well then that's going to be the difference that you make. It depends on the teacher. I guess you always have to find a way to get to the student. So the student attitude is going to determine how you go around teaching this child. It will affect how you teach. Either the attitude that you hold as a teacher or the students coming in with certain attitudes will affect how the teacher teaches. I am hoping that whether you feel good about your class, or feel good about the students, is helping you to be a better teacher.



Attitude influences Literacy/Language as illustrated in the quotes below.

If they have a positive attitude, they'll do whatever it takes to learn to succeed and to learn the language and master it. Whether or not they want to learn and become proficient in another language is their attitude. If you don't want to learn, then you're not going to. You want to do it, you want to learn it, and you will do it. If you don't want to learn, if you don't have the right kind of attitude then that will affect how well you read and how well you learn English. a low level of language they have a negative attitude, they have low self-esteem so that, you know, it's affected by their level.

*Challenges/Accomplishments.* Challenges and accomplishments are the obstacles and victories that are shared or overcome by teachers and students. These may stem, on many levels, from a number of reasons. They may also stem from inside or outside the school walls such as home, parents, social and financial situations, developmental stage, gender, etc. Regardless of its origin, the ELL student must experience success to boost self-confidence.

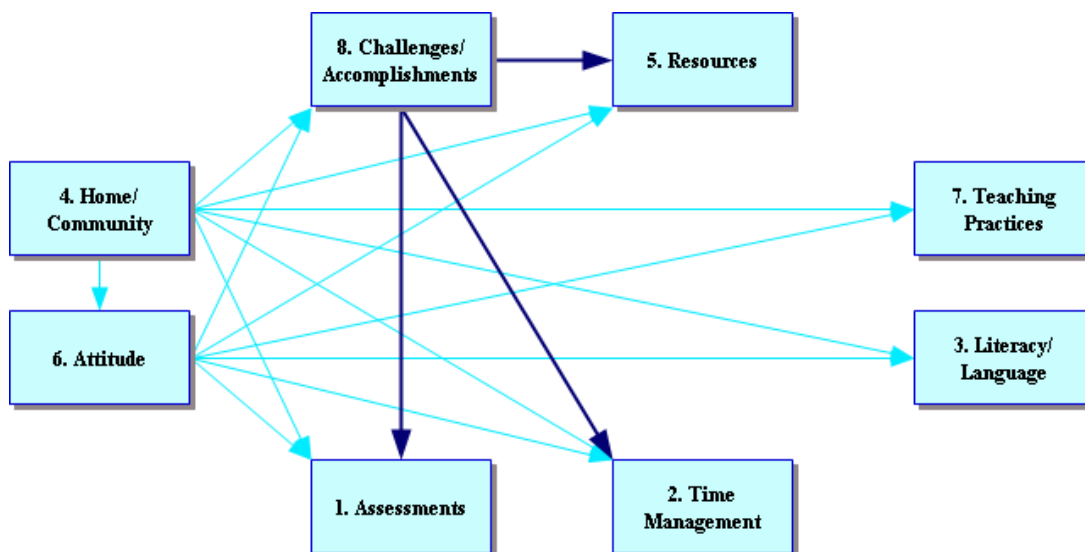


Figure 28. Affinities influenced by Challenges/Accomplishments.

Challenges/Accomplishments influence Assessment as illustrated in the quotes below. Whether they either feel they can meet the challenge or not determines in some cases how they go into the assessment. What the students have to go through will affect, of course, the test scores. Because there are so many challenges that we have to work with what we get and that will determine what the outcome of our testing is. Basically because if they see, like say they start getting higher grades in the classroom, they have a more positive attitude and it keeps them like that feeding of them, okay I can do it if I try. It goes the other way. If they have been failing since they got here or they struggle, struggle, struggle and then they go into the testing, they are assessed, and they get nervous. It affects them.

Challenges/Accomplishments influence Resources as illustrated in the quotes below.

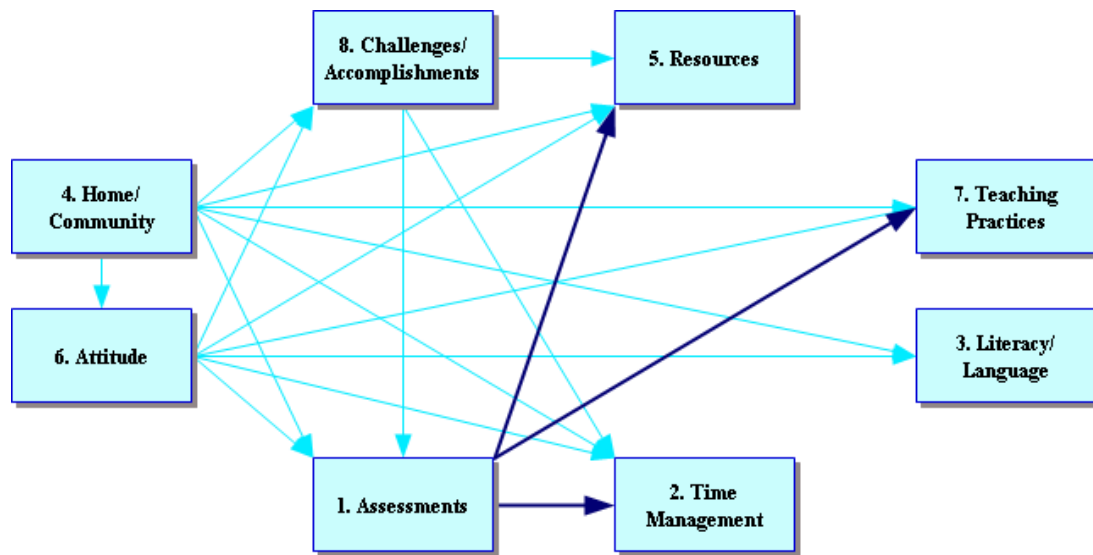
Because whatever needs to be done will be done and if we see that there's success. The resources should be based on what it is we need to accomplish. It shouldn't be the other way around. Some of these challenges need to be addressed and sometimes special training or materials would help.

Challenges/Accomplishments influence Time Management as illustrated in the quotes below.

I think the harder the challenge, the more time, obviously, you're going to take with something. I think those are still tied to attitudes. It's how kids view a challenge. Of how well the time is used either by a teacher or by a student. Depending on how successful you are with, you know, what you have to deal with that determines how much, you know, how your time is worked on.

*Assessment.* Assessment characterizes the exams and tests administered at all levels. It encompasses the gamut from state level standardized exams (TAKS) to teacher informal observations. These assessments are utilized to provide previous educational background and monitor ongoing academic progress. As a school, these results, disaggregated by population and subpopulations on the TAKS test, are public information. In Texas, these results play a large part in a school's and/or school

district's rating. The ELL must be able to pass the TAKS within two years of entering the Texas educational system.



*Figure 29. Affinities influenced by Assessment.*

Assessment influences resources as illustrated in the quote below.

Each year the campus is asked to make a campus improvement plan and determine our needs assessment. And they are based almost strictly on assessment scores. The only other is the dropout rate and the graduation rate. Everything else is tied to TAKS assessment. Everything. Depending on our scores that depends what we...what we need to look for. That will help us bring the students up to par. The assessment will always be there. So we have to find a way to provide the resources necessary for that assessment. Because they are so concentrated on how the kids will perform that they want to help. So the fact that we have a need, it makes for example, like central office district office want to help us more. So they provide more resources so that we can help our kids.

Assessment influences time management as illustrated in the quote below.

Our scores. Our test scores. Right now it's the important thing. I think it's stressed way too much. It gets us away from actually teaching. We are drilling too much and spending our time, wasting our time in a lot of senses on preparing for tests. You have testing set for a certain time and you have to manage your time in getting the students prepared for the assessment. I think that no matter what we have to test. We have to test. We have state-mandated exams that we have to test. We have time, a timeframe, in which we have to teach certain things to these students. So definitely assessment is going to affect the time management on this part. Because in our, and I don't know about the other subjects, but for the areas that are tested statewide, the core areas, we are given a curriculum and we're told, this is what's going to be tested and you better cover it. So we better....and it is the assessment. Because of that assessment we have to be very careful about how we manage our time in the classroom and what we get to teach and what we don't get to teach. So it is those assessments that should be, I would say that if we manage our time good we will get a very good result, positive results. But we are told, okay you know what, we're not going to wait for anybody. This is what you have to cover because it's going to be on the test, so you better cover it. In that whatever the numbers are, they'll tell us where we need to spend our time, how to spend our time, where to place the students.

Assessment influences teaching practices as illustrated in the quote below.

“We want to help the kids more and we do whatever it takes to get them to the level where they'll perform and that'll succeed. So kind of prepare them for the test. I feel sometimes that we prepare them more for the test than...that we spend too much time focusing, okay make sure you get this right so that on the test you will do well. Because depending on what the testing is or what the test is, that is what you work with; the strategies that the kids need to be able to become successful. We have to teach, no matter what, we have to make sure that these students know what is going to be on a certain exam. So we may not be teaching to that exam, but we still have to show them the proper way of taking this type of exam.

We are supposed to be adjusting our teaching based on the kids that we have and at what level they are performing. Because now we are being scrutinized at what percentage of your students pass the test. So if for some reason, you perform lower than last year, percentage wise, you're going to start figure, okay what did I do this time, what do I need to do.”

*Resources.* Resources are the tools or methods that teachers rely on and that enhance a student's education. The manners in which resources are provided and allocated have a profound impact on the teacher's capability to teach concepts and the

student's ability to grasp those concepts, including language. Availability of resources facilitates teaching. However, resources are just a tool and do not necessarily result in a high performing educator. To optimize resources, educators must know how to best utilize them, in specific situations to best accomplish the desired effect or goal.

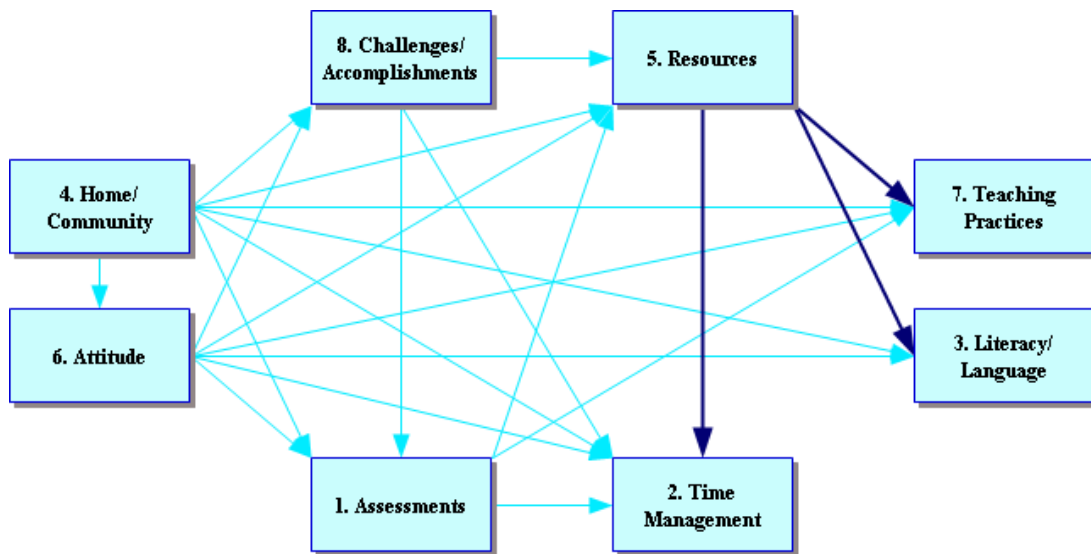


Figure 30. Affinities influenced by Resources.

Resources influences time management as illustrated in the quote below.

“Resources, if there’s no money, if there’s training of programs that will affect how we spend our time or how we spend our time either effectively or ineffectively. It is the resources that determine or schedules or class loads, everything; because of what resources you have available is how you plan your teaching, your lessons, and so forth.

I have plenty of resources in my classroom that I could use for my students, okay. But I have to make sure that I’m able to use them. I can’t use them all at once and expect my student to pick up on what I am trying to get across to him or her. So therefore I have to make sure that one day I use a certain thing, maybe a week of a certain thing, but the following week I use something different. I have to use the different resources that are available to me in order to get something across to my student.”

Resources influences teaching practices as illustrated in the quote below.

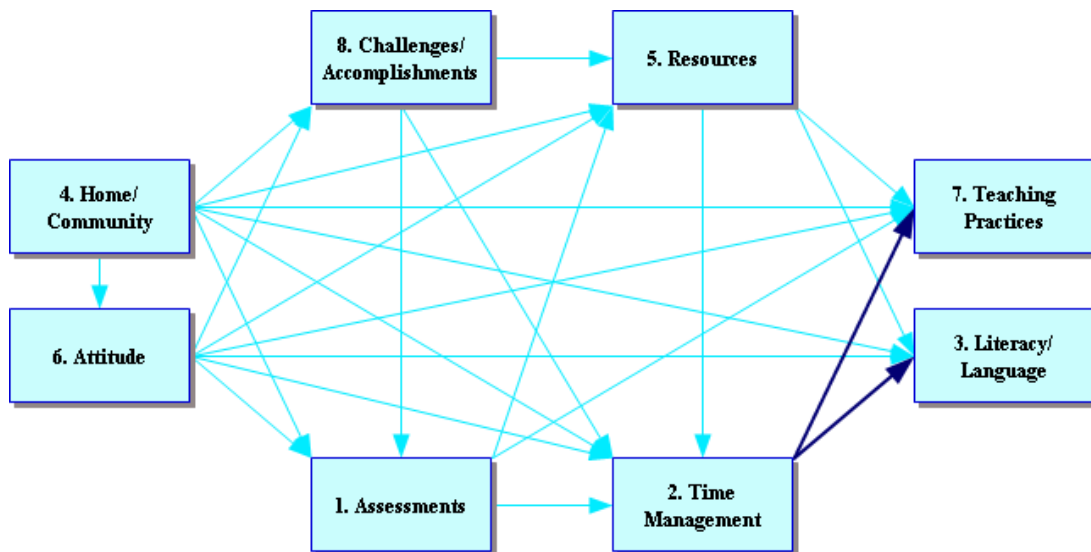
“The more materials we have, the more technology we are given, the better we are going to be, supposedly I guess, the better teachers we are going....or the more prepared we are going to be. The more materials we are going to be able to share with our students. If we have the technology then we can do a better lesson and engage the student a little bit more. Because the more resources we have, the more training we have, the more books that we have, materials, the more likely our job would improve. What is available and how much is available. We are given resources material. There are teachers who just totally ignore it. There are resources available that are just being put in a closet somewhere and not used.”

Resources influences literacy/languages as illustrated in the quote below.

“It provides them with the material that they need in order to develop their language or another language. If there is no funding, there are no books to read. If there is no programs that will teach English language learners how to learn, then it will affect literacy and language.

If students are willing to take advantage of the money that's granted us, if programs are opened, they can learn it and they do succeed. If you have the money, you can pay for tutors, you can, and actually, usually you have the money, more than likely you have an education, if you have the money legally, but usually it's because you got an education and so you know the value. You value it. So usually you see people with money valuing education and also in school. If you have the money, you're going to be able to provide all this programs to help out.”

*Time Management.* This affinity referred to several topics regarding time. In one sense it referred to the amount of time a student had been in the American educational system. Moreover, it referred to the amount of time between a student initiating their American educational career and the time constraints in which these students are expected to pass the TAKS test. It also referred to the amount of time the student and teacher have in class for instructional purposes. Furthermore, it encompassed the amount of time an ELL may need to develop mastery in specific academic content area or skills.



*Figure 31.* Affinities influenced by Time Management.

Time Management influences Teaching Practices as illustrated in the quote below.

Like I said we have to do everything we can to help them. So if we have only a certain amount of time we try to cram everything in and sometimes it helps and sometimes it affects them because they get confused with so much

information coming in. So we have to learn how to do it to really help the student. Do not cram so much information, but give quality instead of just bombard them with stuff so that they can review. You plan out and you only have so much time to work with them. So that determines what strategies you use, what pace you work with the students, and what adjustments you have to make. We are so regulated as to how much time we are spending with the students. How you manage your time is going to determine how well you teach. The amount of time that we have or who we have it with will affect how we tend to teach, how we teach.

Time Management influences Literacy/Language as illustrated in the quote below.

If the teacher manages time well in the classroom, the student will take; will get more out of it. The same way for the student, if the student manages his/her time better outside of school or in school, they'll get more, they'll learn more. So little time, so many things to do. I am pretty sure if they started school sooner, if they had more time, if more time was spent individually with them, they would improve. Just not putting enough time into learning. There's your language. You're wasting time somewhere else.

*Teaching Practices.* Teachers have many responsibilities and many of those are showcased by their teaching practices. Lesson plans and methods of delivery are vital parts of teaching students in a limited amount of time. Furthermore, teachers must be responsive to the needs of their students to help them overcome obstacles. Effective teaching practices means knowing what are your student's needs, available resources, and teacher strengths and weaknesses mesh to provide instruction.



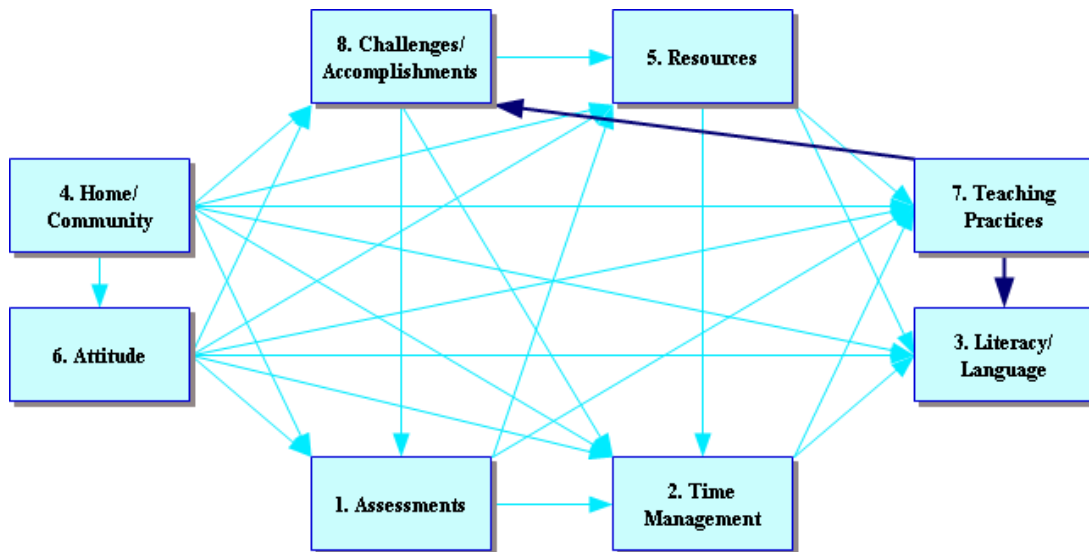


Figure 32. Affinities influenced by Teaching Practices.

Teaching Practices influences Challenges/Accomplishments as illustrated in the quote below.

That's our job. Our job is to teach them to face challenges. It's on the teacher. How much they're able to help or how close their able to get the student to perform better or to push them more, then the students are going to be more successful, they're learning. If we have good teaching practices, we do things that the students are learning and they see that they are learning and, of course, you know, they'll feel good about themselves and they will learn the language and they'll become successful. There just the way a teacher comes in and teaching. If they're not prepared, if they don't understand what the student is going through, it will create challenges.

Teaching Practices influences Literacy/Language as illustrated in the quote below.

Because I think that we have to teach our students that school is apart from the community and the home if they are going to learn English. If they're going to learn English, then a lot of these kids are not going to learn it at home. They're not going to learn it in the community. Therefore, it is our responsibility to teach it to them. So the way we teach it to them is going to affect their literacy. The way you teach, how you teach will affect if students want to learn, if students want to read. What you do in the classroom will definitely decide, help the students. I mean, decide which way the students go. How much they learn. If you do really a good job, then your students are going to learn a little bit more and if you don't then it's going to be a bad year for these kids. Teachers should be working based on the level of proficiency

of each student's language ability. If teachers do what their supposed to do, they help students. They do improve. They do succeed.

*Literacy/Language.* ELL students may come to school with various academic abilities in their native language. They may be illiterate in their native language. They may have difficulty learning a new language at the high school level. Depending on the academic proficiency of their native language, the ELL student has a relatively short period of time to learn a new language. Students may not feel adequate enough to perform in the new language in such a short period of time. Moreover, students may have a stigma about speaking in English amongst peers due to feelings about inadequacy, peer perception, or ridicule.

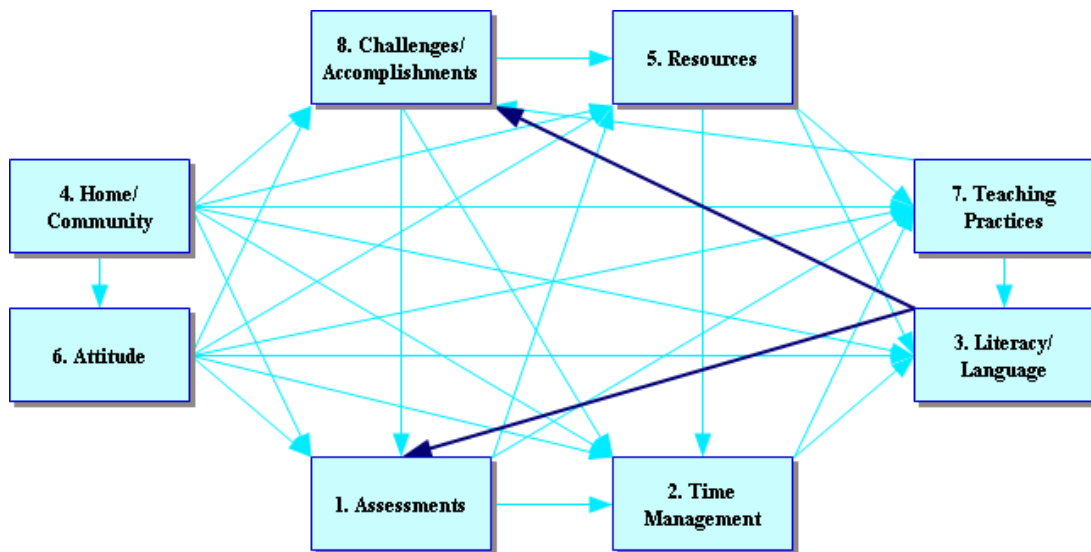


Figure 33. Affinities influenced by Literacy/Language.

Literacy/Language influences Challenges/Accomplishments as illustrated in the quote below.

If they start understanding more. If they little by little, they look up a word in the dictionary, maybe the same word four times in two days before they know it, they'll look it up only one time and before they realize it they don't have to. The more literacy you have, the more prepared. The better you know your language, the more successes you're going to have, the less challenges you will have. A student who is struggling to learn another language, it's going to become a huge challenge for them as they get older.

Literacy/Language influences Assessment as illustrated in the quote below.

If they don't have the language then the assessment will be low or the scores will be low. Your ability to read, to understand what you see on paper, is going to influence your performance on those assessments. If they cannot read and understand the question, then they cannot give you a true assessment of what they know.

If they're not used to thinking in English when it comes time....I'm thinking primarily ELA, the test that they have to write, if they're not used to expressing their thoughts in English, their assessment, when they are given tests, not just the TAKS, but throughout the classroom, if they're not used to speaking or communicating in English, it's going to be affected.

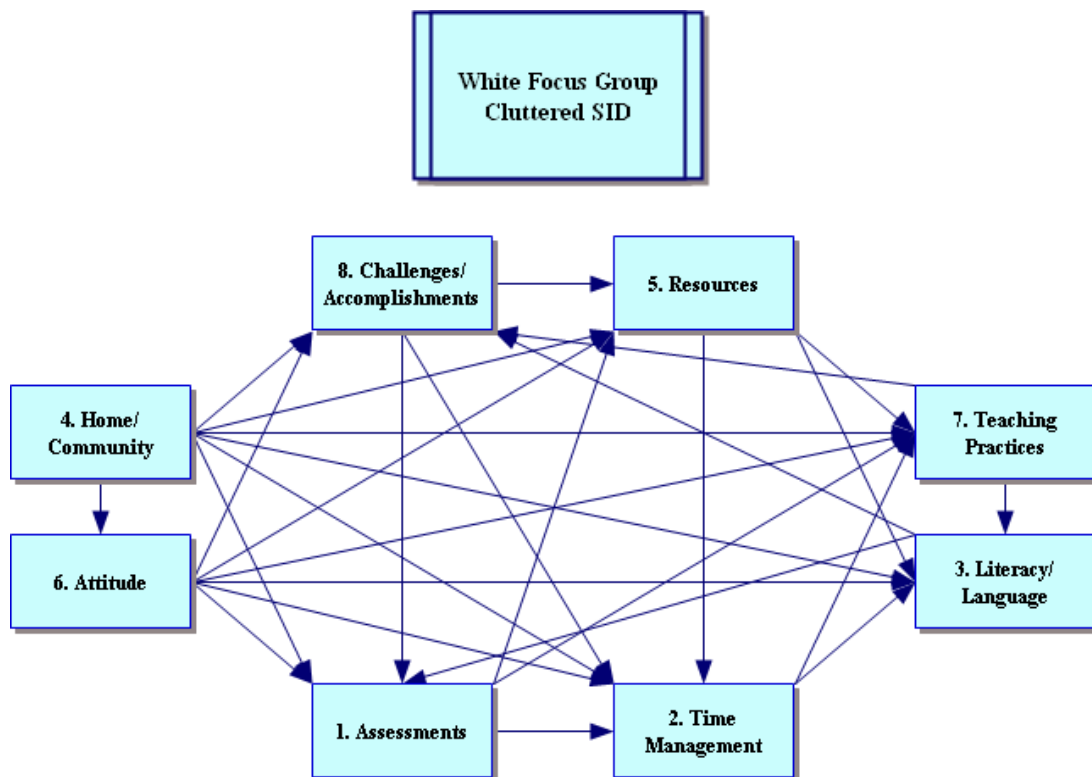
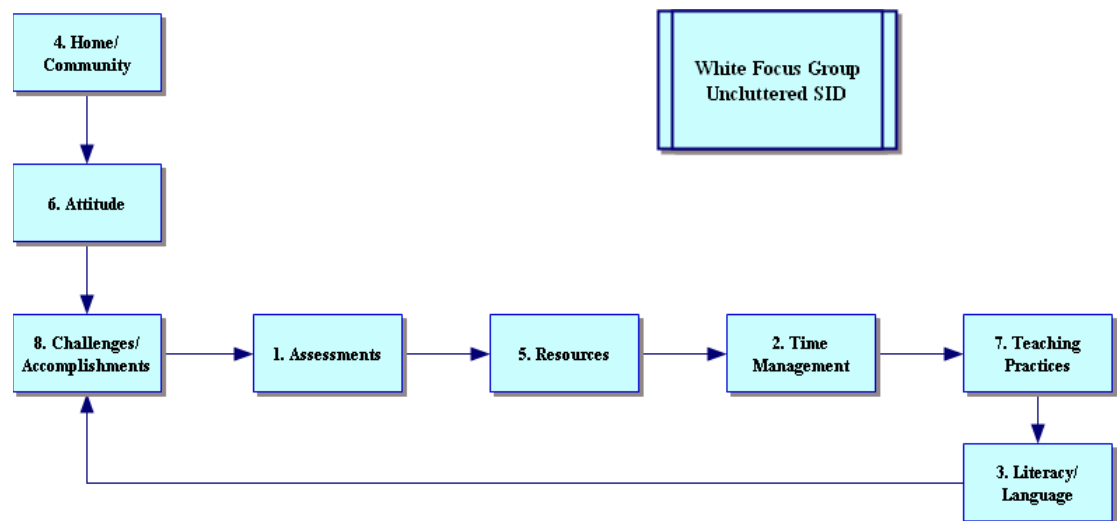


Figure 34. The White Focus Group Composite Interview Uncluttered SID

The cluttered SID contains all of the relationships described by the group. It is saturated with relationship. The problem with saturation is that a cluttered SID, while being comprehensive and rich, can be very difficult to interpret, even for a modest number of affinities that are highly interlocked or embedded within the system. In other words, many systems have so many links that the explanatory power of the system becomes bogged down in the details of the relationships. Comprehensiveness and richness are certainly objectives of the SID; on the other hand, so is parsimony. A way to reconcile the richness – parsimony dialectic is to produce a supplementary or secondary SID called the Uncluttered SID; one that has redundant links removed. See Figure 35.



*Figure 35.* White Focus Group Uncluttered SID.

### Pareto Reconciled SID

Once the researcher had removed all redundant links creating the Uncluttered SID, the Pareto Protocol was examined for conflicting relationships. Conflicts occurred when the same affinity pair had relationships in both directions and a significant frequency that included both in the system. The lesser frequency was temporally ignored in the IRD but was reconciled in the uncluttered SID. To account for the relationships, the system was examined to see if the conflicting relationship was indicated in the system possibly as part of a feedback loop. If such was the case, nothing needed to be done. An arrow was placed from Resources to Home/Community to account for conflicting relationships. Figure 36 shows the White Group Pareto Reconciled SID.

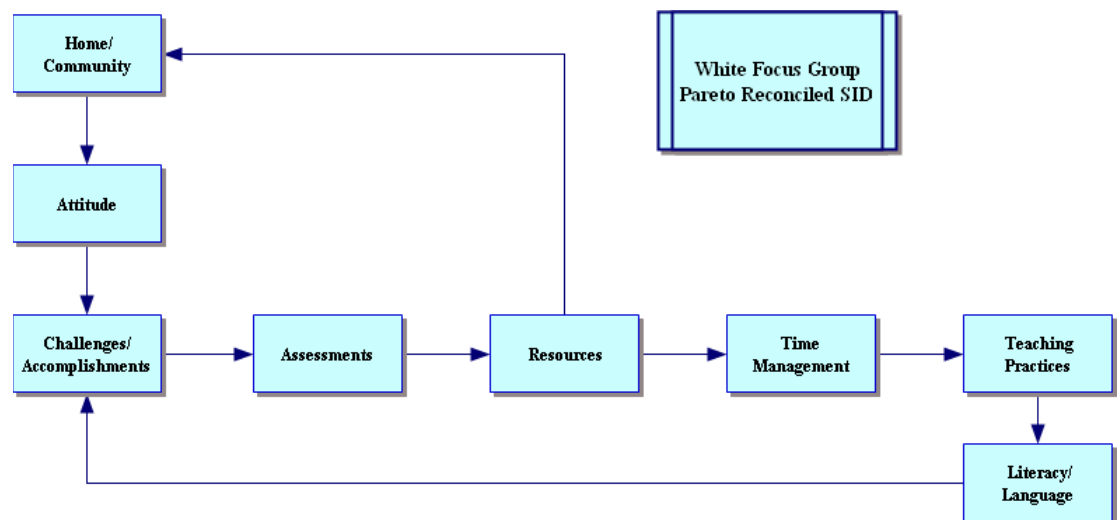


Figure 36. The White Group Pareto Reconciled SID

### Tour through the White Group System

The mind map of the White Group teachers for the ELL student in E.P.I.S.D. was a feedback loop that encompassed the entire system. Home/Community directly

influenced Attitude, Challenges/Accomplishments, Assessment, and Resources of its constituents. This included students, district employees, and any/all EPISD residents. This feedback loop was the driving force of their mind map and seemed to be dominated by affinities that are primarily outside of the classroom and outside of the teacher's control. Assessments in this case may be interpreted as the state mandated test named the TAKS test.

Another feedback loop within the overall feedback loop was composed of Challenges/Accomplishments, Assessment, Resources, Time Management, Teaching Practices, and Literacy and Language. These affinities were primarily inside the classroom or inside the teacher's control. Within this feedback loop, Assessment may be viewed as the practices a teacher employs in order measure students progress to gain the academic concepts. This loop is the outcome of the mind map. This loop can be characterized as the affinities that are within a teacher's control and that may have a direct impact on the student himself.

Merging the two feedback loops together, in essence described the direct and indirect influences on the ELL student according to the mind map of the White Group. According to this mind map an argument that could be made that the Home/Community creates and perpetuates the Literacy/Language of its students and constituents.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **INTERPRETING AND COMPARING THE SYSTEMS**

#### **The Challenge Facing EPISD**

The academic performance of the ELL students continues to be one of the greatest challenges faced by the EPISD. While previous and existing educational reform efforts have had some success at varying levels, sustained high academic achievement among the majority of ELL students continues to elude EPISD, particularly at the high school level. With a majority of the population in Eagle Pass being Hispanic and 91.4% speaking a language other than English at home,, serving this student population effectively has become increasingly critical for EPISD. Furthermore, with the state demographic shifts in population predicted by Murdock over the next couple of decades, effectively educating ELL students is critical for Texas and the nation, as well. To appropriately address the educational needs of ELLs who continue to under achieve and to comply with our educational responsibility, lawmakers and educators must confront the complexities that generate the performance gaps between ELLs and their peers.

This study was designed to explore the mind map of teachers who educate ELLs everyday. The study attempted to provide perspectives and possible explanations regarding why ELLs continue to under achieve academically. This study sought further to reveal the obligations lawmakers and educators have to become reflective practitioners who continually use quantitative and qualitative data to improve the education rendered to ELLs. The qualitative research paradigm and Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) methodology employed in this study actively

engaged constituencies in reflective, meaningful discourse surrounding a phenomenon of interests that resulted in rich, detailed, intensive, and comprehensive data that can be used in strategic planning and implementing change. That is, the IQA process and analysis served as a needs assessment resource and action planning technique to better serve the ELL population in EPISD.

The following research questions guided this qualitative research:

1. What is the mind map of high school teachers in producing a high-performing ELL?
2. What is the mind map of high school teachers in producing a low-performing ELL?
3. How does the mind map of teachers producing high-performing ELLs compare to the mind map of teachers producing low-performing ELLs?

As stated in research question number one, this study sought to identify the mind map of high school teachers who produce high-performing ELL in EPISD as perceived by EPISD high school teachers who have demonstrated success with ELLs. The eight affinities identified by secondary teachers were thoroughly elaborated on in the preceding chapter, as were the relationships among them. Utilizing the IQA methodology, a systems influence diagram (SID) was constructed in connection with Question 1, which is examined further in this chapter. As indicated by Question 2, this study also sought to identify the mind map of high school teachers who produce low-performing ELL in EPISD as perceived by EPISD high school teachers who have not demonstrated success with ELLs. The same eight affinities were utilized in answering Questions 1 and 2. The affinities and their relationships with each other



were explained in the preceding chapter for Question 2 as well. Utilizing the IQA methodology, a systems influence diagram (SID) was constructed in connection with this question, which is further examined later in this chapter. Finally, Question 3 sought to compare both mind maps to each other and possibly reveal differences in perspective that could lead to theories as to why the discrepancy in ELLs' academic performance exists.

The study was designed to have two focus groups. One focus group was composed of high school teachers who produced high-performing ELLs and the other was composed of high school teachers who produced low-performing ELLs. The superintendent's designee determined the groups. Moreover, to avoid the possibility that the researcher would develop preconceived notions about the groups, he was not informed of which group was which. After interviewing all the members of both groups, examining the interviews, and dissecting the data, the researcher believes that both groups had qualified members. Furthermore, the researcher believes that the White Focus Group consisted of high school teachers perceived as producing high-performing ELLs and that the Orange Focus Group consisted of high school teachers perceived as producing low-performing ELLs.

### **Comparing Affinities**

An affinity, while representing a specific category of meaning, is by no means fixed or static in that all members of a constituency do not experience an affinity in the same way. In their discussion of categories in chapter 10 "Interpretation," Northcutt & McCoy (2004) describe the dynamics as follows:

Elements that have the same meaning may have a different *timbre* or “feel” between constituencies, between an individual and a constituency, and therefore between individuals. “Timbre” is to “affinity” roughly as “value” is to “variable” in the quantitative research world. Just as temperature (variable) may range from hot to cold, timbre is a characteristic of an affinity that has a range. In general, there are three kinds of affinities: Structural, scalar, and dialectic.

Although teachers may have agreed on the functional or structural features of the affinity, they attached different values to the features and to the affinity as a whole. The features of an affinity are more than just an unordered list. All comments that describe the affinity have some value placed on them, and it is this difference in value that creates the timbre of an affinity.

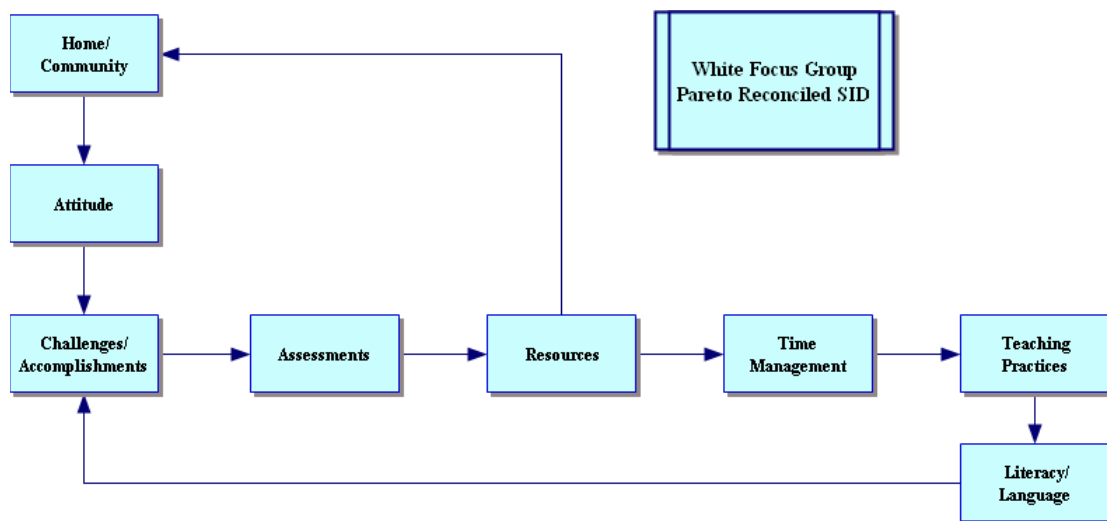
In line with this thinking, Northcutt & McCoy (2004) added, “Other affinities attend more to the value than to the structure.” Descriptions of scalar affinities are usually short and do not require a long list of sub affinities. The range of expression for scalar affinities varies from one extreme to the other, the extremes of which can be represented as a simple polarity. Participants might describe such affinities as having a range from pleasant to unpleasant, low to high, or negative to positive. An affinity that would fall into the structural definition would be the affinity of Attitude.

Those familiar with the theory of levels of measurement will recognize the first two affinity types as roughly analogous to the entire range of levels from nominal to ratio. Traditional level-of-measurement concepts, however, fail to adequately describe the third type of affinity, the dialectic. Dialectical affinities, which quite often are the most interesting elements of a system, contain polarities, but are different from continuous affinities in that each polarity or opposition is required for the existence of the other. The affinity is a process, the reality of which is best

understood as the dynamic interaction of opposing forces. For example, Resources was identified by the participants of the study as a dialectic consisting of these sub affinities: Funding, Programs, Materials, and Training. These four sub affinities were more than just a nominal list. Rather, the participants described an interactive process in which resources were a dynamic result of the continuous interplay of outside forces affecting teacher's ability to teach. The implications of this dialectical meaning of the affinity are that the sub affinities are essential components of the phenomenon of procedures even though they are not intertwined. A further implication of this dialectical meaning is that, if one of the forces ceases to be, then the phenomenon diminishes.

### Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked, What is the mind map of high school teachers in producing a high-performing ELL?

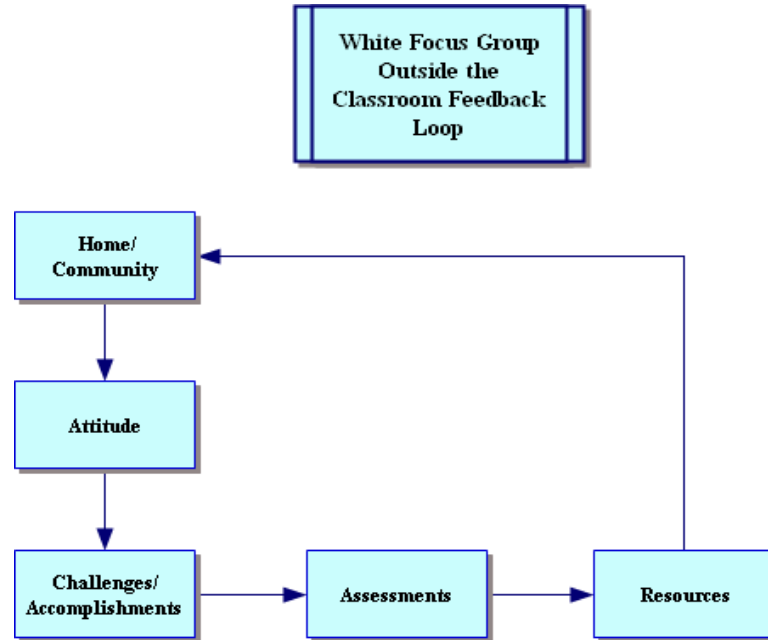


*Figure 37. White Focus Group Pareto Reconciled SID*

The mind map of the White Group teachers for the ELL student in E.P.I.S.D. was a feedback loop that encompassed the entire system. Home/Community directly influenced Attitude, Challenges/Accomplishments, Assessment, and Resources of its constituents. This included students, district employees, and any/all EPISD residents. This feedback loop was the driving force of their mind map. This loop seems to have been dominated by affinities that are primarily outside of the classroom and outside of the teacher's control. Assessments in this case may be interpreted as the state mandated test named the TAKS test.

Another feedback loop within the overall feedback loop was composed of Challenges/Accomplishments, Assessment, Resources, Time Management, Teaching Practices, and Literacy and Language. These affinities were primarily inside the classroom or inside the teacher's control. Within this feedback loop, Assessment may be viewed as the practices a teacher employs to measure students' progress for gaining the academic concepts. This loop was the outcome of the mind map. This loop can be characterized as the affinities that are within a teacher's control and that may have a direct impact on the student himself.

Merging the two feedback loops together, in essence, described the direct and indirect influences on ELL students according to the mind map of the White Group. According to this mind map an argument could be made that Home/Community creates and perpetuates the Literacy/Language affinity of its students and constituents.



*Figure 38: White Focus Group “Outside the Classroom” Feedback Loop*

A feedback loop was created at the beginning of the White Focus Group mind map. This feedback loop involved four affinities: Home/Community, Attitude, Challenges/Accomplishments, Assessment, and Resources. This feedback loop was a driver of the entire system. According to White Group IRD, shown and explained in Chapter 4, Affinity 4 – Home/Community was a pure driver in the system.

The White Focus Group communicated that Home/Community sets the tone and influences every other affinity identified directly. Home/Community included all individuals and families inside or outside the school district, all government and societal structures, geographical location, and various cultural influences of Eagle Pass residents. An interesting note was that both the White and Orange Focus Group placed responsibility largely on the Home/Community. The White Focus Group was more positive regarding the Home/Community affinity than the Orange Focus Group.

An issue identified with the Home/Community was that some people never leave Eagle Pass, which can result in a lack of exposure to other cultures or ways of life. Teachers felt that this could be detrimental to a student's development as students and parents may not see the need for English language skills or alternative ways of doing things. Home/Community could limit their ideas, dreams, and outlook on their future. After time there is only the Eagle Pass way of doing things because the people don't know, that they don't know, what they don't know. The danger in this kind of thinking is stagnation in the form of accepting status quo... Citizens can't address what they don't understand. Without a basic level of awareness regarding the affinities that affect ELL success, the people of Eagle Pass have no impetus to search outside of Eagle Pass for solutions; thus, accepting the status quo, ignorance to other methods of addressing concerns, and creating an on-going cycle in Eagle Pass way of life.

Moreover, depending on how it is perceived, this loop seems to be dominated by affinities that are primarily outside of the classroom and outside of the teacher's immediate control. Teachers in both the White and Orange Focus Group felt that support toward education from the parents of their students was somewhat lacking. However, White Focus Group had a sense of hope and a shared responsibility for educating the children in EPISD. These teachers also felt that their students understand that to be able to survive and succeed in Eagle Pass, one must have a commanding grasp of the Spanish language. Students also see English, on the other hand, as a foreign language not vital to the everyday survival of Eagle Pass residents.

Because of the community make-up and proximity to Mexico, Spanish reigns supreme in Eagle Pass.

The next affinity in this feedback loop was Attitude. As previously stated, residents/students of EPISD understand that people need Spanish language skills to survive in Eagle Pass. Teachers felt that this deeply impacted a student's and their family's attitude toward learning English and/or keeping up with their academic studies. Also, teachers felt that the lack of exposure to other systems, cultures, or locations, also had an effect on the attitude of their students. They felt that because students did not experience environments other than Eagle Pass, or travel across the border to Mexico, they could not grasp why English is important. Because of this mindset students are stuck in Eagle Pass or at the very least restricted in their mobility and flexibility to provide for their livelihood. However, the White Focus Group claimed that it was their charge as an educational community to change attitudes and to spark motivation in the students to help them overcome the barriers, and traditions instilled into their students. These teachers were pleased to find that some students and parents hold a positive attitude toward education and the English language, but these were in the minority.

Interestingly, Attitude ranked high in terms of influence in both focus groups. However, the attitude of the teachers in the White Focus Group that was more optimistic. Teachers in this group saw this as a barrier or obstacle that could and should be overcome. While some teachers in the Orange Focus Group were optimistic, the majority saw Attitude as a barrier to success and that parents, community, society, etc. are responsible for motivating students to learn English or

keep up with their studies. For the most part, the Orange Focus Group felt that the teacher was not a primary factor.

Motivation quickly became a topic under the affinity of Attitude. The White Focus Group felt that student motivation was lacking. This could tie in with Home/Community affinity in that students did not see a reason to learn English. There were other reasons why student motivation may be lacking, according to the White focus Group. One of those reasons was fear of failure. Teachers often spoke of students that had the capacity to produce quality academic work but shunned the idea due to fear of failure. The idea of failure creates insecurity within students, which lowers their self-esteem and ultimately prevents trying. Throughout the interviews, teachers from both focus groups reiterated that students must experience success to build self-esteem and encourage effort/motivation. Failure can place students in a corner where they cease to try and use this excuse as a defense mechanism. Another reason noted was fear of being ridiculed by other students. This seemed to increase student insecurity.

A point worth noting is that teachers felt that the attitude or motivation in a child was more conducive to learning English or attending school from students who were first or second generation residents of the United States. If we apply the theory of exposure to other cultures, then these students may not be stuck in the Eagle Pass cycle. They are new and do not possess the why-learn-English or why-go-to-school mentality. They see the importance of learning English and how an education may be a vehicle to progress in life toward their dreams. Unfortunately, it is the children of the children, the third and fourth generations who are becoming stuck in the Eagle



Pass Cycle. They become well versed in the expectations of their peers, community, and survival methods in Eagle Pass.

The affinity of Attitude also crept into the adults. White group felt that the parents of ELL at times were not supportive of learning English or attending school. This may be tied back to the lack of exposure to other cultures or ways of life, previously dubbed the Eagle Pass Cycle. The parents work but set an example for their children that they can make ends meet with little to no English or schooling. In essence, this creates a self-perpetuating cycle that encompasses families for generations.

Another group of adults were the teachers. The teachers of the White Focus Group had a notion of: what can we do to motivate these students? The attitude of the teacher is key. These teachers felt that it was their job to educate these students regardless of circumstance or situation. These teachers seemed resilient as they marched forward with their students, living their failures and accomplishments with them. The Orange Focus Group teachers had a timbre to the affinity of: I work with them as best as I can but some of them refuse to do it, I can only do so much.

With both focus groups the overall attitude held by the teachers was that students almost needed to be forced to use the English language. Some teachers accomplished this by refusing to use any Spanish in the classroom regardless of the situation. It was very evident that the sample as a whole felt that more L1 does not equal more L2, which is contrary to research stated in Chapter Two. Teachers were pushing students to use English by these tactics, however, some teachers claimed that students flat out refused to use English or refused to try. These seem like disconnect

and unnecessary struggle between teachers and students that does not support the outcome desired by the teacher, student, or educational institution.

If we apply the Eagle Pass Cycle to teachers, from the sample taken (both focus groups), most of them attended college educational training in another city. The majority of teachers in both groups attended college in another city or state. These teachers saw the advantage of an education and speaking English. However, due to the small sample, it is not possible to speculate that most teachers in Eagle Pass were educated outside of Eagle Pass. In fact, from the small sample, about 1/3 of the teachers lived and were educated in Eagle Pass for the majority of their life including their college education. This would be another study to specifically look at the teachers employed within Eagle Pass, their exposure to places outside Eagle Pass, and how that translates into their students or classroom.

The next affinity in this feedback loop is Challenges/Accomplishments. The White Focus Group felt that a challenge in working with ELLs is one of great need and substantial difficulty. However, they also felt that teachers were going to do whatever they had to do. The White-Focus-Group teachers felt that they needed to overcome the challenges whether the students wanted to or not. The timbre of the White Focus Group was positive and assertive. One challenge was the TAKS test. This exam is viewed as a huge obstacle and will be discussed later. However, the challenges were not solely academic. Some challenges were students being accepted by their peers. Another challenge was surviving in their environment by any means. Students and their families see what they need to do to survive. Survival becomes an accomplishment for these individuals. The environment and culture dictate what is

needed and how to survive. As stated earlier, Spanish is dominant language in Eagle Pass; survival means being able to communicate. The teachers felt that this worked against them because the community does not support the English language.

The teachers in both focus groups noted that the community does not support the English language because it does not demand that English be spoken. Frequently in a negative tone, teachers stated that lack of English spoken in the community translated to a student not visualizing the English language as a necessity. With this mindset, the challenge of being literate in English was diminished and in some cases eradicated. An individual's lack of English may perpetuate him or her in the Eagle Pass Cycle. The inability to effectively communicate in English limits and/or inhibits an individual from leaving Eagle Pass and being exposed to new things.

On similar note, teachers commented that ELLs are in new territory; a new language. They comment that students had their language – Spanish, and now they are in a new language, in an American high school. ELLs are unfamiliar with system, language, and environment. At the high school level, if an ELL is entering the American educational system for the first time in their life, the challenges are intensified and elevated. The challenge of coping in the educational settings by this type of student becomes a major ordeal.

The next affinity in this feedback loop is Assessment. This affinity had a negative timbre from both focus groups. Those negative thoughts were mainly directed toward the TAKS test. Teachers in the White Focus Group did not disagree with the need for testing, but did take issue with its ability to measure an ELL's capabilities. A student may have a solid handle of the content area, but due to the

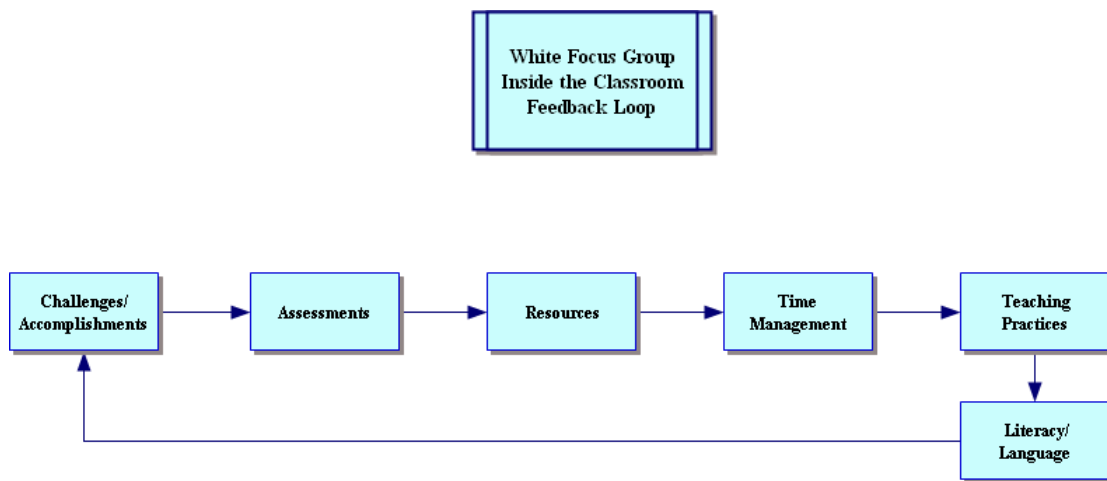
language barrier, the student may not understand the question or answers. Teachers felt that many ELLs that had recently entered the high school for the first time had a huge disadvantage on the TAKS. This was due to vocabulary, reading level, and that the TAKS test was developed using state norms. Yet, the demographic breakdown provided in chapter three shows clearly that Eagle Pass is not representative of the demographic norms of the State of Texas. ELLs under-perform on the TAKS test. Another study for a dissertation could include how the TAKS test or state assessment meshes with communities that are along the Texas Mexico border.

In Texas, students must pass the TAKS test administered at the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade to graduate from high school. Teachers cited that some ELLs' hopes were crushed because they knew that the only reason they would not graduate was because of language. ELLs that fulfilled every requirement for graduation, except for passing the TAKS test were placed in a position where they, too, perpetuated the Eagle Pass Cycle. Without a high school diploma, an ELL is stuck, unprepared to venture out and become successful in areas of Texas that are distant from the border.

The final affinity in this feedback loop is Resources. In this loop resources may take the perspective of resources in the community. The community of Eagle Pass is composed by a considerable percentage of families and individuals below the poverty line. More than a third of Eagle Pass residents are foreign born and over 91% of residents of the age of 5 or over, speak a language other than English at home. Teachers cited the community as a source that does not support English. However, no teacher mentioned resources in the community to help with language acquisition. If there are resources in the community, teachers from this study are not tapping into

them. If there are not any resources available in the community, then this is an opportunity for governmental institutions or systems to work together and establish them.

To help break the Eagle Pass Cycle, resources in the community may band together to provide support to ELLs. This feedback loop encompassed affinities that are outside of the classroom. The affinities and their effects have created the dubbed Eagle Pass Cycle.



*Figure 39: White Focus Group “Inside the Classroom” Feedback Loop*

This feedback loop from the White Focus Group mind set is the outcome. It is dominated by affinities that are inside the classroom. The feedback loop is initiated by the affinity Challenges/Accomplishments. The major accomplishment for teachers is for their students to graduate with their high school diploma regardless of background. Teachers commented that inside the classroom motivation is a factor. This factor is pivotal and determines much in term of progress. The motivation that is within the ELL was a critical point according to both focus groups. This was a point

that could make or break a student's spirits and accomplishments. Although, very few teachers from both focus groups, commented on their tactics or strategies for motivating their students. It became very apparent that collectively the teachers felt the motivation was an issue for the ELL student.

The next affinity is Assessment. As previously mentioned the state assessment discussion had a negative tone by all teachers. Once again, teachers did not disagree with assessment; it was the instrument itself and its implications. For the most part, all teachers felt that the results of the TAKS of ELLs who have been in the American educational system a short time was unfair and an inaccurate measure of their capabilities. Inside the classroom, this translates to attempting to provide ELLs with vocabulary, reading, and test taking skills. However, due the challenges associated with lack of English skills and enough to time to be properly educated in the academic content, the ELL struggles and gets frustrated. Teachers also felt frustrated because they have a short period of time to prepare students for the TAKS test, they have students at various levels of ability, and the teachers themselves are measured by the outcomes of the exam.

The next affinity is Resources. When teachers were asked about resources, they concentrated on money, equipment, training, and programs. This is true for both groups. The teachers were also quick to state that at the high school level there was not a comprehensive program or any program at all if the student attended the CC Winn Campus. A student who entered CC Winn and it was the first time he or she had been in the American educational system was at a major disadvantage. At the EPHS campus there was an ESL Program.

Teachers from both focus groups had mixed feeling that the campus and the district was supportive of materials or needs for the classroom. It seemed that some teachers knew that there were many types of resources and others that felt resources were limited. Funds and materials seemed to be distributed inequitable according to the teachers.

Training did not seem to be a strong point for the district from the perspective of both focus groups. Several teachers commented that they receive some type of training at the beginning of every school year. The teachers that made this comment stated that it's the same training every year; others could not recall if training was available. Another point was that teachers did not seem to understand what an ELL was; this was true for both focus groups. Even though the researcher had provided the focus groups with the definition of an ELL several times, teachers continuously reverted back to the ESL population. An ELL is an individual whose first language is anything else other than English. ESL is a program designed to provide academic support to a small group of ELLs. While students in the ESL Program are ELLs, they do not encompass the entire population. The researcher felt that teachers were unaware of these dynamics. Training in current terminology and strategies seemed appropriate.

The next affinity is Time Management. From both focus groups, this affinity seemed to have three general areas of commentary or themes: Two-year time frame, Class period length, and individual instruction. Moreover, these themes had a negative timbre from both focus groups with the seemingly general tone that time was not in the favor of students and teachers.

The first theme was the two-year time frame the State of Texas allows for a student to pass the TAKS test. The Texas Education Code states:

§ 39.027. EXEMPTION. (a) A student may be exempted from the administration of an assessment instrument under:

(1) Section 39.023(a) or (b) if the student is eligible for a special education program under Section 29.003 and the student's individualized education program does not include instruction in the essential knowledge and skills under Section 28.002 at any grade level;

(2) Section 39.023(c) or (d) if the student is eligible for a special education program under Section 29.003 and:

(A) the student's individualized education program does not include instruction in the essential knowledge and skills under Section 28.002 at any grade level; or

(B) the assessment instrument, even with allowable modifications, would not provide an appropriate measure of the student's achievement as determined by the student's admission, review, and dismissal committee;

(3) Section 39.023(a) or (l) for a period of up to one year after initial enrollment in a school in the United States if the student is of limited English proficiency, as defined by Section 29.052, and has not demonstrated proficiency in English as determined by the assessment system under Subsection (e); or

(4) Section 39.023(a) or (l) for a period of up to two years in addition to the exemption period authorized by Subdivision (3) if the student has received an exemption under Subdivision (3) and:

(A) is a recent unschooled immigrant; or

(B) is in a grade for which no assessment instrument in the primary language of the student is available.

The teachers felt that the two-year time limit for an ELL arriving to the Texas Educational system was insufficient for students to develop language. This is consistent with Endo and Miller's (2004) statement that research shows that students need 5–7 years to reach proficiency. Students coming into the Texas educational system cannot be expected to reach academic proficiency in a language foreign to them within two years.



Teachers from both focus noted that the 45 minutes provided for each class was not ample to time to properly teach some of the more limited English literate students. Teachers commented that actual teaching time permitted after roll call, settling in, the managerial part of running a classroom, teachers had approximately 35 minutes for instruction. Within this time, teachers went on to state that it was difficult to slow down for students that were unable to keep up with the pace of the class or the pace of the prescribed curriculum. Moreover, teachers stated that the 45 minutes were short for instruction, coupled with so much material to be covered in one school year, being able to slow down for students not grasping concepts was very challenging. If a teacher did slow down, that teacher ran the risk of not fully preparing other students who have a commanding grasp of the material.

For ELLs that needed more one on one, instruction was difficult. Time was limited in each class. Teachers felt that they were caught between two undesirable positions. On one hand, if one on one instruction was not provided to the ELL, then, in essence, a teacher was seen as not providing adequate instruction for that student(s). On the other hand, if a student was provided one on one instruction to an ELL, then the teacher ran the risk of not fully preparing other students in the classroom. Teacher frequently commented that they came in early, stayed after school, or set up alternative arrangements to provide ELL with additional one on one instructional time. However, according to teachers many students had transportation issues, other students/parents had the belief that time outside the official school day was not for instruction, and at times there were scheduling conflicts on the teacher's part.

The next affinity in the feedback loop is Teaching Practices. The White focus group's teachers felt that the teacher in the classroom sets the tone. Teachers must be conscious of their audience, their capabilities, and levels of understanding. Teachers felt that they must utilize appropriate teaching practices and accommodate their students learning styles. Moreover, the teachers noted that students must feel that they are part of the class. As mentioned above, one on one time for students is difficult.

The final affinity in the Inside the Classroom Feedback Loop is Literacy/Language. This affinity could be seen as the outcome of this feedback loop and the entire mind map as well. The White Focus Groups teachers concurred with research stating that the more adept a student is in their native language; the more capable that student is to learn a new language. Teachers commented that due to living in a border town, that English and Spanish did not follow conventional rules from either language. Students attempted to combine both languages into one language, in which conventional rules did not apply. As one teacher put it, "a unique culture" is created concerning language. Furthermore, creating a language of their own does not provide the students a solid foundation in either language.

Other issues teachers mentioned were that students did not practice English. Teachers felt students did not practice at home or in other places. Students preferred to use Spanish as it was the dominant language spoken at home. Students watch television in Spanish and interacted mostly with everyone in Spanish. This ties back to the affinity of Home/Community, stating that the students do not see a need for the English language. With the community and method of survival utilizing Spanish to communicate, students are not encouraged to use or practice their limited English

skills. With the lack of practice comes limited vocabulary and limited opportunities to read in English. According to the teachers this is detrimental to an ELL's proficiency with their English language skills and academic work.

## Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, What is the mind map of high school teachers in producing a low-performing ELL?

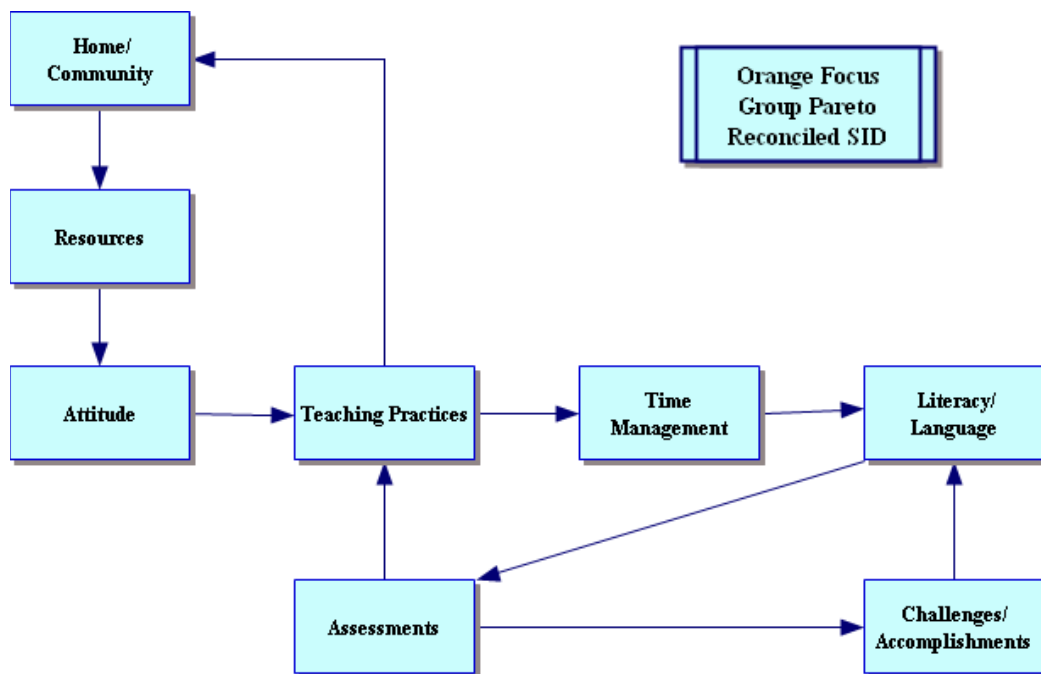


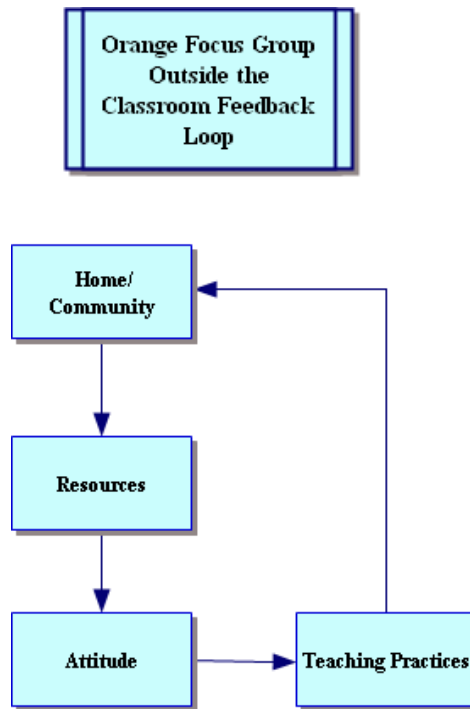
Figure 40: Orange Focus Group Pareto Reconciled SID

The mind map of the Orange Focus Group teachers for the ELL in E.P.I.S.D. is a feedback loop that encompasses the entire system. The Home/Community influences the Resources and Attitude of its constituents. This includes students, district employees, and any/all EPISD residents. The Teaching Practices are influenced by these three affinities but in turn, Teaching Practices influence the

Home/Community creating a feedback loop within the larger feedback loop. This feedback loop is the driving force of their mind map. This loop seems to be dominated by affinities that are primarily outside of the classroom and outside of the teacher's immediate control. Teaching Practices in this case may be interpreted as the processes or practices taught by a community in order for survival.

Another feedback loop within the overall feedback loop is composed of Teaching Practices, Time Management, Literacy/Language, Assessment, Literacy/Language, and Challenges and Accomplishments. These affinities are primarily inside the classroom or inside the teacher's immediate control. Within this feedback loop, Teaching Practices may be viewed as the practices a teacher employs in order for students to gain the academic concepts. This loop is the outcome of the mind map. An observation for this loop is that the affinity of Assessment is a pivotal point within this loop.

Merging both of the feedback loops together, in essence describes the direct and indirect influences on the ELL student according to the mind map of the Orange Focus Group. An argument that could be made according to this mind map is that the Home/Community creates and perpetuates the Challenges /Accomplishments of its students and constituents.



*Figure 41: Orange Focus Group “Outside the Classroom” Feedback Loop*

A feedback loop is created at the beginning of the White Focus Group mind map. This feedback loop involves four affinities: Home/Community, Resources, Attitude, and Teaching Practices. This feedback loop is a driver of the entire system. According to Orange Group IRD, affinity 4 – Home/Community is the only pure driver in the system. Similar to the White Focus Group mind map, this Orange Focus Group mind map also represents affinities outside of the teacher’s immediate control, this feedback loop is located at beginning of the mind map, and Home/Community is the only pure driver of the system. Furthermore, three affinities – Home/Community, Resources, and Attitude – are contained in the initial feedback loop. However, the differences are placement of the affinities within the feedback loop and the number of affinities within that loop.

Home/Community for the Orange Focus Group mind map was very similar to the White Focus Group mind map. Other than pure driver, Home/Community for the Orange Focus Group represented many of entities that it did for the White Focus Group. However it does differ in timbre. The Orange Focus Group felt that the lack/absence of English utilized at home and within the community is negatively impacting their students' ability to acquire the English language. Additionally, the Orange Focus Group collectively cited other issues revolving around our society. The break down of the nuclear family and the socio-economic status of Eagle Pass were two issues. Another issue cited was the culture. According to the Orange Focus Group, the culture did not support education or education was not important until recently.

The next affinity in this feedback loop is Resources. Resources for the Orange Focus Group had a very negative timbre overall. Teachers for the most part felt that resources in the form of funds were available, but were unsure of the amounts and whether they had access to it. Moreover, in deciphering where the monies are applied, it seemed to the researcher that Orange Focus Group teachers were unsure of the definition of ELL. Consistently, teachers referred to the ESOL or ESL (English as a second language) students as the program that receives the funds.

The program of ESL is created by the Texas Education Code. The statute reads as follows:

**§ 29.053. ESTABLISHMENT OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND SPECIAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS.**

(a) The agency shall establish a procedure for identifying school districts that are required to offer bilingual education and special language programs in accordance with this subchapter.

(b) Within the first four weeks following the first day of school, the language proficiency assessment committee established under Section 29.063 shall determine and report to the board of trustees of the district the number of students of limited English proficiency on each campus and shall classify each student according to the language in which the student possesses primary proficiency. The board shall report that information to the agency before November 1 each year.

(c) Each district with an enrollment of 20 or more students of limited English proficiency in any language classification in the same grade level shall offer a bilingual education or special language program.

(d) Each district that is required to offer bilingual education and special language programs under this section shall offer the following for students of limited English proficiency:

(1) bilingual education in kindergarten through the elementary grades;

(2) bilingual education, instruction in English as a second language, or other transitional language instruction approved by the agency in post-elementary grades through grade 8; and

(3) instruction in English as a second language in grades 9 through 12.

As § 29.053 (d) (3) clearly states, an ESL program must be in place for students 9 through 12 if 20 or more students are classified as limited English proficient. Teachers from both groups commented that the ESL program was more pronounced by far in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. With the configuration of the schools, EPHS housing 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Grades and CC Winn housing 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grades, this left CC Winn with a limited to non-existent ESL program. This works against the students in the manner that if a student arrives to the Texas educational system for the first time during the high school years, depending on what grade they are enrolled, they have

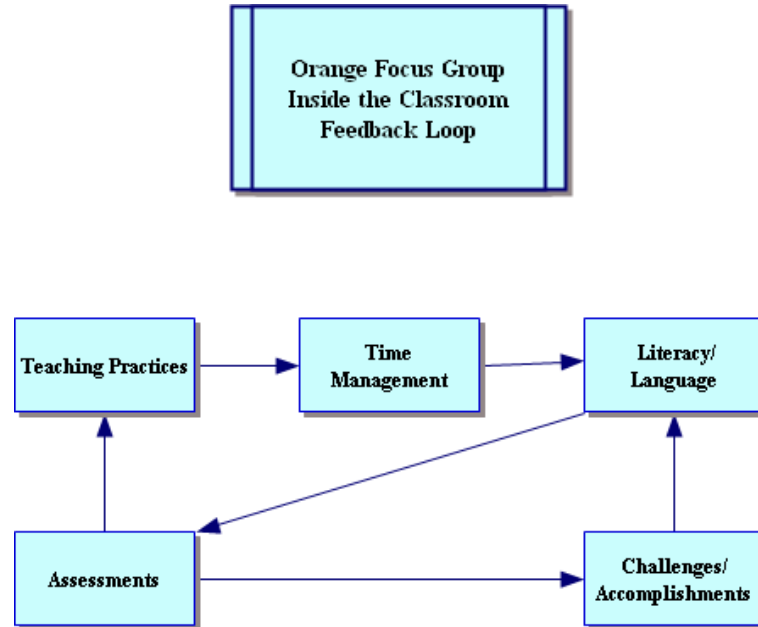
limited to no academic support in the form of specialized programs to learn the English language. In addition, all the teachers felt that the district did not support the learning of the English language due to the lack of a newcomer program, no ESL program at CC Winn, and limited teacher training. Teachers mentioned that their training in this area was the same presentation every year. Others mentioned lack of materials or limited training in the use or best practices for using the materials/programs.

The next affinity in this loop is Attitude. Attitude resembles many of the points that the White Focus Group mentioned. However, in the Orange Focus Group, the timbre of this affinity was negative and pessimistic. Some individuals were very positive, but collectively the group was negative. Teachers questioned the motives behind teachers' work, administrators' work, and the community. Very little a shared responsibility was mentioned, although there was one suggestion that expectations must be taught. Teachers alluded to having sole responsibility for teaching students English and/or that academic content rests solely on their shoulders. The researcher sensed a hint of resentment on the part of a few teachers. Teachers overall felt unsupported by other entities connected with classroom, school district, and community. Teachers also noted that students must earn every point or inch. They felt that using the Spanish language in their daily lessons to help a student understand was detrimental or represented a student's lack of motivation to put forth effort to learn English. This seemed contradictory to research stating more L1 = more L2. Also, it is contradictory to statements that students must experience some success in order to build self-esteem and motivation.



The Eagle Pass cycle was mentioned in the Orange Focus Group mind map. Similar to the White Focus Group mind map, the Eagle Pass cycle arose during the commentary surrounding not achieving much more than the status quo in order to survive in Eagle Pass. HEB (regional supermarket) and Wal-Mart were cited as aspirations for students to provide for their livelihood in Eagle Pass. Teachers felt for the most part post secondary education was not an aspiration for their students, much less life outside of Eagle Pass.

The final affinity in this feedback loop is Teaching Practices. As part of the “Outside the Classroom” feedback loop, this affinity may consist of observations, practices, or lessons taught by individuals or systems outside the classroom. The Eagle Pass Cycle teaches the students necessary skills to survive in Eagle Pass. Students are aware that Spanish is the language of communication in Eagle Pass and that it is a must. Students are also aware of the support structures around them in order to help them survive in Eagle Pass. However, a question must be asked: What is the definition of success for this community? These practices and observations on the part of the students cycle back to home and community perpetuating the Eagle Pass Cycle.



*Figure 42: Orange Focus Group “Inside the Classroom” Feedback Loop*

The affinity Teaching Practices initiates the Orange Focus Group “Inside the Classroom” feedback loop. This feedback loop is similar to the White Focus Group “Inside the Classroom” feedback loop in the respect that every affinity in the Orange Focus Group “Inside the Classroom” is also an affinity in the White Focus Group counter part. Moreover, both of these feedback loops are at the end of their respective mind maps. They differ in the respect that the White Focus Group “Inside the Classroom” feedback loop consists of six affinities and the proximity of the affinities to each other.

This affinity in this loop may be perceived as the practices or methods utilized inside the classroom. The Orange Focus Group commented considerably on how the curriculum is not conducive to helping ELL s learn English. One item cited was Shakespearean English. English is difficult for students to learn, however,

Shakespearean English is not Standard English but is part of the TEKS. For an ELL this represents a huge obstacle. Teachers also commented that many of the ELLs do not have a grasp on the basics of the English language such as, simple grammar or parts of speech. Furthermore, teachers commented that students are not passing the academic courses during the regular school year. However, they are being passed from grade to grade through summer school. The issue here is, how the ELLs are being positively impacted through summer school?

The next affinity is Time Management. Both focus groups had very similar comments toward this affinity. Both groups collectively echoed each other. As previously stated and explained, there seemed to be three general themes: Two Year Time Frame, Class period length, and individual instruction. Both had a negative timbre. The time management of the teacher within the classroom working in conjunction with teaching practices and resources available is crucial. Teachers must utilize their training, materials, and programs and must know their students in order to educate them best. The time the state allows for an ELL to pass the TAKS, the time the school district allows for each class and number of classes dedicated to language acquisition, and the time allowed by the teacher for one on one instruction for struggling students seemed to not support the student attempting to acquire English.

The next affinity in this loop is Literacy/Language. Similar to the White Focus Group, some teachers did feel that more L1 = more L2. However, an issue brought up by the Orange Focus Group was that some students were illiterate. Some students could not read or write in Spanish and/or English. Some students came from a limited to non-existent schooling background. For an ELL that was in this situation, at the

high school level, were very large obstacles, too large to overcome in the two-year time period allowed to pass the TAKS. Some teachers felt these obstacles were too large to overcome within a four-year period. It was not that the students could not learn or did not possess the capabilities of acquiring a foreign language; it was that the student was untrained, systems were lacking to help support the language acquisition at many levels, and time was short. The absence of skills developed over time is a major component of why these ELLs are not succeeding.

The next affinity in this feedback loop is Assessment. An observation is that Assessment is a pivotal point the feedback loop and mind map. Both focus groups had a negative timbre toward Assessment when speaking about the TAKS. All teachers felt that a large emphasis is placed on the TAKS test and that at some level it drives the curriculum or what is taught. Teachers felt that due to the vast amounts of materials needing to be covered to prepare students for the TAKS test, that teachers were not being allowed to concentrate on other items such as language acquisition. Teachers felt that this further frustrated ELLs when taking the test because so much hinged on the outcome of this exam. Teachers felt that the TAKS did not adequately or justly assess an ELL's academic skills because of the language barrier. The TAKS test is given in English only and no translations can be made on them. Teachers felt that some of their ELL students could do well on the exam but they may not understand what the exam is asking. Students do poorly because they do not understand what is being asked, which leads to frustration, low self-esteem, and utilizing excuses as a defense mechanism. Furthermore, with the Eagle Pass Cycle in

place, a student may take the path of least resistance and they may ask themselves:  
Do I really need English to survive?

Assessment is a pivotal point in this feedback loop and mind map. It has a general theme in this study that language acquisition in the area of English is a major component vital to the success of the ELL in the Texas educational system. This leads to the affinities of Teaching Practices plus their supporting affinities and Challenges/Accomplishments. The teaching practices were discussed earlier in this chapter for both focus groups. However, it comes back to Assessment via Time Management and Literacy/Language.

The Challenges/Accomplishments is the other direction the loop points to from the affinity of Assessment. In a dynamic weave, Challenges/Accomplishments create a feedback loop to Assessment via Literacy/Language. The challenges are great. As earlier noted, the TAKS exam and illiterate students are just some of the challenges. Moreover, when this loop is connected to the Orange Focus Group “Outside the Classroom” feedback loop, then the Eagle Pass Cycle becomes a challenge for that teacher. The accomplishments seemed to hinge on passing the TAKS exam because without it students may not graduate from high school.

The pivotal point of Assessment seems to lead back to Literacy/Language regardless of the direction taken. The key to this feedback loop seems to be in the affinities of Assessment and Literacy/Language. The development of language acquisition seems to be a primary focus or desired outcome. What is not clear from the Orange Focus Group is how to develop language skills for their ELL students and

their role in that process. Furthermore, how do these teachers best garnish the skills and talents of the ELL to make them academically successful?

### Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, How does the mind map of teachers producing high-performing ELLs compare to the mind map of teachers producing low-performing ELLs?

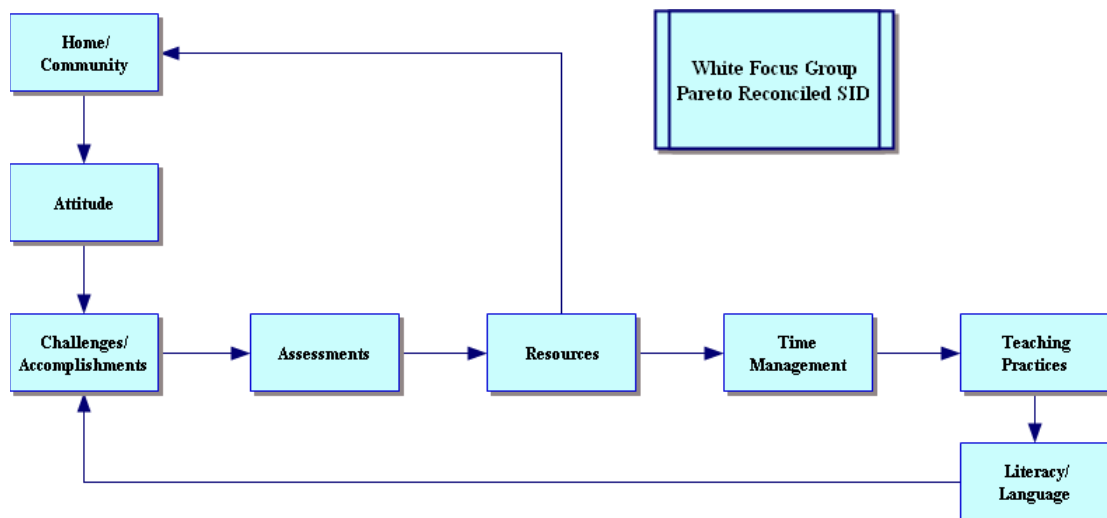


Figure 43: White Focus Group Pareto Reconciled SID

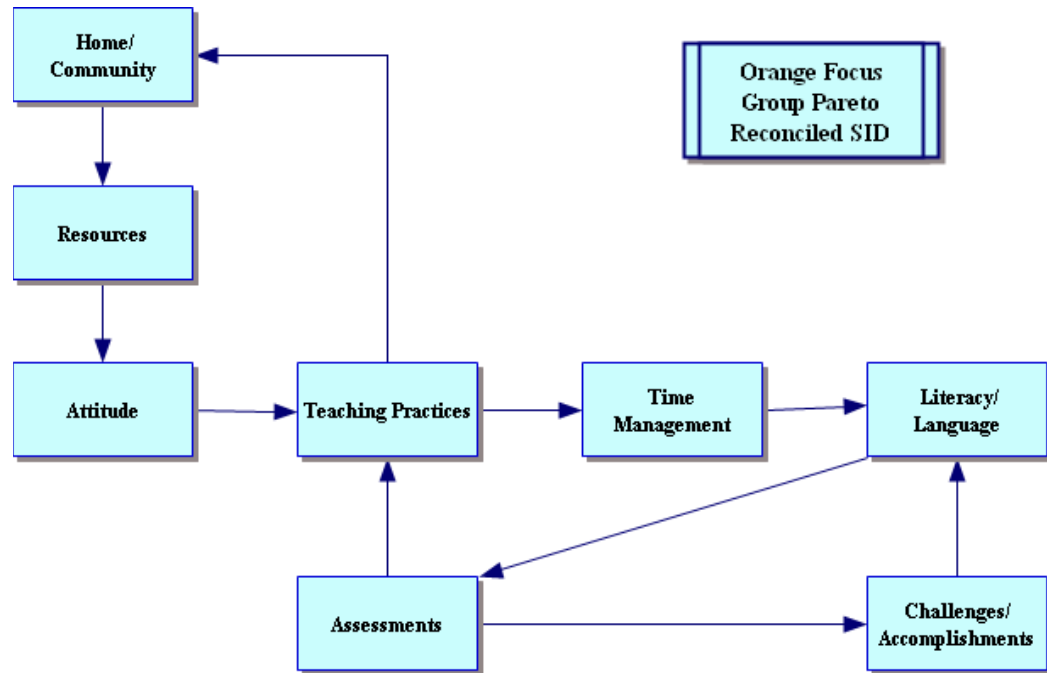


Figure 44. Orange Focus Group Pareto Reconciled SID

Similarities and differences in the content of each affinity or groups of affinities have been explained and discussed earlier in this chapter. In addition to those comparisons, another comparison that could be made in observing the two mind maps is placement of affinities within the mind map, which affinities are the drivers and which affinities are the outcomes.

Both mind maps identified one pure driver of their mind maps. For both mind maps the affinity of Home/Community was the pure driver. Both mind maps were comprised of smaller feedback loops and in essence making each mind map one large feedback loop.

The placement of the Affinity of Attitude brings an interesting observation. In the White Focus Group's mind map, the placement of the affinity of Attitude is directly connected to Home/Community. In the Orange Focus Group's mind map, the

Affinity of Resources is between Home/Community and Attitude. The observation was that if Resources shapes the Attitude of individuals this logic is backwards. The researcher feels that the Attitude or outlook of individuals should drive the acquisition of Resources necessary for ELLs to be academically successful. If the Resources shape the Attitude then the mind set is limited to what is in front of them. The opportunity to reach to new levels or think outside the box is greatly hindered.

The placement of the Affinity of Assessment is another point. The researcher agrees with both focus groups that Assessment is an outcome and not a driver. The TAKS exam is currently a large part of the accountability system in the State of Texas. However, the researcher feels that it is not a completely negative subject. While the researcher feels that the exam is not perfect and that there maybe opportunity for adjustments with the exam content and administration; the TAKS test does serve a purpose as cited in Chapter Two, “Historically, the ELL and Hispanic student populations have been overlooked or purposely avoided in terms of direct effective education.” With the academic achievement of the ELL population being scrutinized, it brings to the forefront the effective, best practices for educating this population. Furthermore, it provides a measuring stick for comparing ELLs’ academic achievement against themselves, other student populations, and provides data over time.

The placement of the affinity Challenges/Accomplishments are located at two different places in their respective mind maps. The White Focus Group places this affinity as a secondary outcome; however it is part of the driving feedback loop. On the other hand, the Orange Focus Group places this affinity as the Primary Outcome.



The researcher disagrees that this affinity should be an outcome, much less the primary outcome. Upon reviewing the commentary from the Orange Focus Group, both axial and theoretical coding, the Orange Focus Group concentrated their comments primarily on the challenges that face ELL and the teachers. In theory, by placing the affinity of Challenges/Accomplishments as the primary outcome of their mind map, then they are creating their own challenges. This is another part of the reason why the researcher feels the Orange Focus Group is producing low-performing ELLs.

The final affinity to look at is the placement of Literacy/Language. The White Focus Group places this affinity as their primary outcome. This is part of the reason why the researcher believes the White Focus Group is producing high-performing ELLs. However the Orange Focus Group places this affinity as a secondary outcome. As stated above, in theory this is a misalignment of philosophical stance. The teaching and effort on the part of teachers should be concentrated to educate the ELLs. Teachers of ELLs work to develop their students' literacy and language skills to have them become academically successful. The language acquisition is the ultimate desired outcome for ELLs to become high academic achievers. This misalignment of Orange Focus Group mind map with the affinities of Challenges/Accomplishments and Literacy/Language may significantly distort the perception of the teachers.

## **Practical Implications**

The researcher recommends, based upon the results of this study, that the EPISD should consider the following:

1. In an effort to enlarge the repertoire of explanations as to why ELLs continue to elude high-performing academic achievement, EPISD should employ the use of qualitative data by engaging educators in thoughtful, meaningful professional discussion on the subject.

2. Highlight the responsibility and obligation of teachers to become reflective practitioners who continually use quantitative and qualitative data to improve the quality of their teaching. Furthermore, encourage the establishment of professional learning communities among teachers and all educators. Encourage and support educational leaders to interrogate systems and practices that further perpetuate the deficit-thinking philosophy and guide the refining efforts.

3. Employ the Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) methodology, process, and analysis as a needs assessment technique and action planning resource on how to better serve the ELL community. The structure in the IQA methodology allows for professional, worthwhile discussions surrounding the topic of interest resulting in rich, detailed qualitative data that could be utilized as a needs assessment and action planning resource.

4. Generate, direct, and maintain focus on the vision of equitable academic success. The school district, campus, and teachers must reinforce and maintain focus on their goals of producing a high achieving ELL throughout the school year.

5. Research staff development and effective best practices that have proven success in school districts similar in demographics and size to EPISD. Ensure that the training and resources do not perpetuate the deficit-thinking concept.

6. Collect, interpret, and use data to monitor the achievement of ELLs. Aggregate and disaggregate supplementary district and campus data on areas of concern surrounding the achievement of ELLs (i.e. attendance rates, completion rates, discipline referrals, special education enrollment, advanced/honors course enrollment, gifted/talented course enrollment, etc.).

7. Implement campus improvement plans surrounding specifically the achievement of ELLs on respective campuses at the secondary level, including specific, measurable objectives language acquisition, strategies to be implemented, personnel required, and evaluation measures utilized.

8. Implement evaluation measures to ensure that individual campuses are incorporating a needs assessment tool and providing effective resources to address concerns associated with the ELL population.

9. Ensure that ELL community, students, and parents are provided a forum on a regular basis to express their needs and concerns. Place measures and appropriate personnel in place to successfully reach this community.

10. Alter district and school climates to data-driven decision-making and results-driven educational-accountability with a focus primary on learning and equitable academic success. To ensure continuous performance, implement appropriate supervision, evaluation measures, and hold people accountable for results.

11. E.P.I.S.D. needs to secure partnerships with local, regional, state, and federal entities to invest resources to bring new ideas, tools of communication, and programs to the community.

In summary, it is the hope of the researcher that the implications emerging from this case study contribute to reform efforts necessary to producing a high-performing E.P.I.S.D. ELL population, specifically in the development of language acquisition as it relates to effective practices and beliefs in effectively educating ELLs.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The completion of this study produced a body of research on comparing teacher perception of ELLs at the high school level in EPISD, as perceived by secondary teachers. Recommendations for further study include:

1. Extending on this research by employing the Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) methodology with other similar districts and compare and contrast the finding from both studies.
2. Extending on this research by employing the Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) methodology with EPISD high school campus principals and/or key central office administrators, so as to compare and contrast the final composite SIDs with the teacher's SID.
3. Employing the Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) methodology for secondary campus administrative teams and their teachers in an effort to produce meaningful dialogue as it relates to the achievement of ELLs, so that findings could

be utilized to produce campus improvement plan/goals as it relates to the achievement of ELLs. Further, compare/contrast individual campus results.

4. Extending on this research by adding more participants to further determine commonalities or differences.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **APPROVAL FROM EAGLE PASS ISD**

This letter is to confirm the acknowledgement and acceptance of E.P.I.S.D. (EPISD) as a cooperating partnership for the Comparing Teacher Quality of English Language Learners: A Case Study of E.P.I.S.D. dissertation conducted by Guillermo Mancha, Jr. Mr. Mancha is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in Educational Administration at the University of Texas at Austin.

It is the understood by EPISD and approved by EPISD that the partnership will be on a voluntary basis without any financial compensation or reimbursement. Moreover, EPISD understands that the data volunteered by the participants will be utilized for purposes of the study only and that the confidentiality of the participants will be highly protected from district employees. Furthermore, participants involved will have the liberty to candidly speak their mind without any retaliation or inquiry by district employees. Finally, EPISD understands that there will be some requests of district data, employee data, substitute teachers (to be coordinated and paid by EPISD), and other miscellaneous items made by Mr. Mancha to facilitate the study.

Mr. Mancha will honor any request made by the school district as long it does not compromise the integrity of the study or the confidentiality of the participants. Mr. Mancha acknowledges and accepts that he is a guest at EPISD and will be respectful of all district and campus employees and regulations. Moreover, Mr. Mancha adheres to the EPISD schedule and will make contact with the superintendent or superintendent's designee to clear questions or concerns as the study progresses

before any action is taken. Finally, Mr. Mancha understands that the study will be conducted with the least possible interruptions to the educational environment.

Thank you,

Jesus Sanchez, Superintendent  
E.P.I.S.D.

Thank you,

Guillermo Mancha, Jr., Researcher  
University of Texas at Austin

**APPENDIX B**  
**COVER LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS**

*(Participants Name)*

*(School Address)*

Dear *(Participants Name)*:

You have been selected to participate on a voluntary basis for a dissertation study conducted by Guillermo Mancha, Jr. Mr. Mancha is currently a doctorate student at the University of Texas at Austin pursuing an Ed.D. in Educational Administration. The study will seek to employ your professional judgment and expertise in educating English language learners (ELLs).

As a participant in the study, your candid responses are needed. Your **CONFIDENTIALITY** will be highly protected and your identity will not be compromised in any manner. Moreover, upon revealing the results of the study, participants will be shared and published as a number only. Furthermore, your participation is/will not be linked to your employment status at EPISD.

As a participant your commitment would be to attend one focus groups session which will be no longer than one school day. A substitute teacher will be arranged for your class on that day. This will take place in early to mid-March 2006. Furthermore, a 45 – 60 minute individual interview with me only will also take place in late March or April. In order to protect your time during instruction, this interview



will be scheduled during your conference period or at a time that is mutually convenient.

I will soon be contacting you to inquire if you would like to participate in the study. I will be utilizing EPISD email or telephone to communicate with you. Also, please feel free to contact me at (512) 557-6781 or at [bleedlonghornorange@yahoo.com](mailto:bleedlonghornorange@yahoo.com) if you have any further questions or if I may be of any assistance.

Thank you very much for your consideration and I look forward to visiting with you.

Guillermo Mancha, Jr., Researcher  
University of Texas at Austin

## APPENDIX C

### FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

In this study, the focus group participants included 20–24 high school teachers selected by the superintendent or superintendent’s designee as having or not having success with ELL students. There were two focus groups. Each focus group met only once as a group for approximately 6–7 hours, including lunch and breaks. Silent brainstorming was the first step for each of the IQA focus groups. During this phase, the members of each focus group were asked to write their experiences or thoughts on individual note cards. The focus groups met on separate days, but each was prompted as follows:

Please take a few moments to think about your achievement results, the gains, the setbacks, the challenges and the barriers in working with the ELL student population. Think about the overall system, the factors in our district that promote, support, and/or impede the performance of the ELL student. Think about the programs, initiatives, people, groups, resources, interactions, perceptions, and intentions that come into play. Use the note cards to brainstorm as many factors as you can. Use one note card per thought/factor.

After producing as many cards as possible, the members were asked to tape their note cards along a wall. The facilitator/researcher read each card aloud for consensus on the meaning of the card or for clarification. The group was then asked to engage in an activity referred to as *inductive coding*, where the group silently organized the cards into groups of meaning.

Following *inductive coding*, *axial coding* was performed. Axial coding is the naming, reorganizing, clarifying, and refining of the affinities. The participants sorted any cards that may have been miscategorized initially into a more appropriate group

and complete the affinity naming process. With the aid of the facilitator, the collective thoughts of the group were organized into common themes or affinities, manageable in number, named by the group. Major categories of affinities were reviewed and may have been combined or divided into hierarchical systems of sub affinities. During this affinity production process, the participants had the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and to express their views on the subject. Seeking the greatest amount of detail or richness in the data was the primary objective at this stage in the process. Through group discussion and consensus, the descriptions were refined and narrowed by the group until each participant agreed that the affinity name accurately represented the data. The affinities were given titles determined by the participants, which were listed at the top of the column of data it represents.

After the affinities had been identified clearly by the group, the group analyzed the nature of the relationships between each of the affinities. All possible pairs were analyzed according to only three possibilities: (a)  $A \rightarrow B$ , A affects B; (b)  $B \rightarrow A$ , B affects A; or (c) no relationship.

Then the group was asked to produce a matrix containing all the perceived relationships in the system into an affinity relationship table (ART).

*Constructing the Interrelationship Diagram (IRD).* In an effort to examine links between the affinities, the focus group was asked to engage in theoretical coding, an activity where the group develops statements of cause and effect, or propositions, from their derived data. The participants were to determine if a direct cause–effect relationship existed or if no relationship existed between all the affinities. The resulting table was termed an IRD.

## APPENDIX D

### INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The interview protocol consisted of two parts: (a) the open-end *axial interview* designed to provide rich description of affinities and (b) the structured *theoretical interview* designed to identify relationships between the affinities.

**Axial interview.** The axial interview segment was derived from the affinity write-up. After providing the interviewer with the group results, the interviewee was asked to respond to the affinity names by responding to the following questions: “What does the affinity mean to you?” and “Tell me about your experiences with the affinity.”

**Theoretical interview.** The theoretical interview was presented through an ART. As such, the ART served as the basis for the theoretical interview where, after receiving the table with all possible relationships between the affinities, the interviewees were asked to give their view as to whether they believe there was a relationship between each affinity, identify the relationship, and provide explanation. The researcher probed the interviewees for experiences that supported their view on the affinity relationship.

The researcher interviewed each participant individually only once. Each interview took approximately 45–60 minutes. During the individual interview, each participant was asked for their thoughts on each of the affinities and their relationship to each other. The individual interviews were recorded with an audio recorder and be transcribed by an independent transcriber.

## APPENDIX E

### ELL INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL-AXIAL CODING

#### ELL Individual Interview Protocol

#### Axial Coding

As you may recall, you participated in a focus group at the end of March and identified areas that impacted English language learners. We called these areas affinities. Also as you may recall, we identified an ELL as any student whose first language was another language besides English. Focus groups have identified affinities that help describe or define their experiences with English language learners. Let's look at each of these affinities one at a time and tell me about your experiences with each.

##### 1. Assessment

Assessment or testing was identified as an affinity that impacts English language learners. Tell me your thoughts on assessment or testing.

2. Time Management  
Time management was an affinity that was identified as affecting ELLs. Tell me your experience with time management.

##### 3. Literacy/Language

Literacy/language was an affinity that was identified as having an impact on ELLs. Tell me about literacy/language.

##### 4. Home/Community

Home and community have an impact on ELLs. Tell me about the ELLs home or community.

##### 5. Resources (funding, programs, materials, training)

Resources were identified as what you need to educate ELLs. Tell me about resources.

##### 6. Attitude (attendance)

Attitude was described as an impacting affinity. Tell me about attitudes.

##### 7. Teaching Practices

Teaching practices affect ELLs. Tell me about teaching practices.

##### 8. Challenges and Accomplishments

Challenges and accomplishments were identified as affinities. Tell me about challenges and accomplishments.

## APPENDIX F

### ELL INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL-THEORETICAL CODING

#### **Theoretical Coding**

Many of the themes or affinities identified have some kind of relationship; one effects or causes the other. Let's look at each theme and decide if or how it relates to each other theme. Tell me about your experiences with such relationships. Please give specific examples of how the relationships have affected your experience.

Affinity Name	Possible Relationships
1. Assessment	$A \rightarrow B$
2. Time Management	$A \leftarrow B$
3. Literacy/Language	$A \leftrightarrow B$ (No Relationship)
4. Home/Community	
5. Resources	
• Funding	
• Programs	
• Materials	
• Training	
6. Attitude	
7. Teaching Practices	
8. Challenges/Accomplishments	

Interview  
Affinity Relationship Table

Affinity Pair Relationship	Affinity Pair Relationship
1 2	3 6
1 3	3 7
1 4	3 8
1 5	4 5
1 6	4 6
1 7	4 7
1 8	4 8
2 3	5 6
2 4	5 7
2 5	5 8
2 6	6 7
2 7	6 8
2 8	7 8
3 4	
3 5	

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